

THE FREEMAN

IDEAS ON LIBERTY



**Prelude to the
Total State**

**Lessons from
an Entrepreneur**

**The Toxicity of
Environmentalism**

Men Versus Machines

SEPTEMBER 1992

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IDEAS ON LIBERTY

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THE FREEMAN

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1992

VOL. 42

NO. 9

Published by
The Foundation for Economic Education
Irvington-on-Hudson, NY 10533

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The Freeman is the monthly publication of The Foundation for Economic Education, Inc., Irvington-on-Hudson, NY 10533. FEE, established in 1946 by Leonard E. Read, is a nonpolitical educational champion of private property, the free market, and limited government. FEE is classified as a 26 USC 501 (c) (3) tax-exempt organization. Other officers of FEE's Board of Trustees are, Gregg C. MacDonald, chairman; W.A. Speakman III, vice-chairman; Paul L. Poirot, secretary; Don L. Foote, treasurer.

The costs of Foundation projects and services are met through donations. Donations are invited in any amount. A trial subscription to *The Freeman* is available to any interested person in the United States for the asking. Additional single copies \$1.00; 10 or more, 50 cents each. For foreign delivery, a donation of \$35.00 a year is required to cover direct mailing costs.

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Bound volumes of *The Freeman* are available from The Foundation for calendar years 1971 to date. Earlier volumes as well as current issues are available on microfilm from University Microfilms, 300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106.

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Power and Accountability

I cannot accept your canon that we are to judge Pope and King unlike other men, with a favourable presumption that they did no wrong. If there is any presumption it is the other way, against holders of power, increasing as the power increases. Historic responsibility has to make up for the want of legal responsibility. Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely. Great men are almost always bad men, even when they exercise influence and not authority: still more when you superadd the tendency or the certainty of corruption by authority. There is no worse heresy than that the office sanctifies the holder of it For many years my view of Catholic controversy has been governed by the following chain of reasoning: 1. A crime does not become a good deed by being committed for the good of a church. 2. The theorist who approves the act is no better than the culprit who commits it. 3. The divine or historian who defends the theorist incurs the same blame To commit murder is the mark of a moment, exceptional. To defend it is constant, and shows a more perverted conscience.

—LORD ACTON

A Fundamental Inconsistency

There is a fundamental inconsistency between farm price support programs that raise product prices and food-assistance programs. Price support programs raise prices of milk, fresh fruit, sugar, peanuts, and other products at the same time low-income consumers are deemed to have too little money to provide food. Domestic consumers are legally prevented from purchasing lower-priced dairy products, for example, by import restrictions which are a necessary component of price support programs that hold domestic prices above world prices. In addition to administering the dairy program, which raises fluid milk prices, for example, the USDA has prevented reconstituted milk from being sold for less than the price of whole fluid milk. In marketing orders for fruits, lower-income consumers are harmed most by quality control provisions that restrict sales of lower grades and smaller sizes of commodities. It is ironic that bil-

lions of dollars are being spent on government programs to raise prices of milk and other commodities while, at the same time, billions of dollars are also being spent on programs to lower the price of food to low-income consumers.

—E. C. PASOUR, JR.
Agriculture and the State

Food Shopping in Russia

Just to obtain milk, for example, Anna, a factory worker and housewife, must take public transportation, time-consuming in itself, from store to store, using her experience to guide her to shops that have received deliveries of milk in the past. A few kopecks here and a ruble placed in strategic hands there will give her tips that she could never have found on her own. One salesclerk tells her about an afternoon milk delivery scheduled for a store on the other side of the city and, made especially garrulous by an extra few kopecks, the clerk advises her how many kopecks she will need to bribe another salesclerk to receive a few liters. Anna immediately rushes to the other store to bribe the clerk before the delivery. Because she is far from the factory where she works, she decides to scour the nearby stores for bread and cabbages while she is there. She keeps an eye out for the milk truck the entire time. Anna manages to get another tip in much the same way about an upcoming shipment of cabbages across town. With that valuable information in hand, she feels the day was productive, although the milk delivery arrived three hours late, precluding her return to work. Once in possession of the valuable liters of milk, Anna carefully arranges them in her shopping bag and presses the bag close to her body to try to prevent the milk from freezing in the subzero temperatures during her long ride home.

—PAUL CRAIG ROBERTS
and KAREN LAFOLLETTE
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Legal Discrimination

As currently engaged in, race-norming tests, and gender- and race-based preferences and quotas have two incontrovertible characteristics. The

first is they discriminate against white males in favor of ethnically identifiable minorities, and in favor of white females who have had themselves legislatively declared a disadvantaged class—supposedly victims of white male oppression. Second, they are premised on the proposition that their beneficiaries are intellectually inferior to white males, or are otherwise unqualified to succeed on their own merit. The use of race- or gender-based tests, preferences, and quotas constitutes discrimination—discrimination directed solely at white males. These practices are wrong, they are unconstitutional, and they should be abolished. No group should be more aware of this fact than we African-Americans.

—W. JAMES ELLISON, writing
in *The Birmingham News*

Your Papers, Please . . .

My little sister, a high school senior, recently put together her college applications. Everything looked fine: good grades, camp counselor, band, cheerleader. All the evidence of a fine young person who can both contribute to and gain from higher education.

But that's not all the evidence that went into her state scholarship applications. My sister had just documented that she is 1/32 American Indian. This made her eligible for minority-only state scholarships.

What other societies have required racial documentation for participation in government programs? The Soviet Union issued identification cards that classified the carriers as "Russian," or "Georgian," or "Jewish," regardless of where they lived at the time. And, of course, the Nazis required proof of "pure Aryan blood."

In a lighter mood, I might suggest that genealogy will be a growth industry. However, happy as I am that my sister is college bound, I'm concerned. Will the accomplishment mean as much to her if she is left wondering whether she could have made it without this advantage? And as much as her internal well-being, I'm worried about her growing up in a world where one has to document one's racial heritage.

—ERIK P. WINGREN
Seattle, Washington

Thoughts on Creativity While Watching *The Twilight Zone*

by Thomas A. Giovanetti

In one of the better known episodes of *The Twilight Zone*, the head of a manufacturing company callously replaces experienced workers with “more efficient” computers and automated machinery. The CEO is gleeful at the prospect of an automated production line since machines “don’t call in sick, take breaks, or require maternity leave.” In this episode, which stemmed from the concern that automation would make human beings obsolete, the machines eventually drove the CEO mad, and he himself was replaced by a machine. In the justice of *The Twilight Zone*, the CEO got his comeuppance because he did not properly value the inherent dignity of human beings.

Of course, we know that technology does not make human workers obsolete. Though there is always some temporary displacement of lower-skilled workers when new technology comes along, the technological revolution is relieving human beings of the more monotonous and dangerous tasks in the workplace, and is freeing them for more creative ventures.

But no matter how advanced technology becomes, it is doubtful that machines will ever possess *creativity*. The idea of a computer performing a task with creativity or inspiration seems best left to the imagination of science fiction writers. Without doubt, computers are superior to human

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beings at certain tasks. Anyone who has watched a computerized drill press or robotic welder cannot but marvel at the ability of machines to outperform human workers at repetitive tasks. Computers can process data and reach conclusions based on that data much faster than human beings. Computers reach more reliable conclusions in some areas because they base their conclusions on data alone and are not confused by emotion. But computers probably will never be creative. The increasing complexity of computer hardware and software is a testament to *human* creativity, not to some talent or dignity resident in silicon.

Creativity is one of those inherent human traits that distinguish us from machines and animals. The Bible tells us that man is made in the “image of God.” Though theologians have puzzled for centuries over the meaning of the phrase, “image of God,” certainly one of the characteristics God has shared with us is his creativity. The first thing God chose to tell us about himself is his creation of the universe in its almost infinite diversity. And part of God’s plan for man (the pinnacle of his creation) is that man be creative. God’s job for Adam was to name the animals, to tend the Garden of Eden, and to otherwise maintain the new creation—tasks that certainly demanded creativity. But even apart from theology, it is evident that human beings are happiest when their lives involve creativity.

Because creativity is an essential characteristic of man's nature, the quality of a person's life may well be determined by the degree of creativity present. A stereotypical "life of misery" that we might conjure up—say working 12 hours a day in a coal mine or working in a Dickensian sweatshop—would be characterized by drudgery and monotony, and by a distinct lack of creativity. On the other hand, what we might imagine as a life of pleasure—such as being a writer or artist, or running our own business—would be characterized by a demand for creativity and imagination. We crave creativity, even if we do not think of ourselves as "creative." Our need for variety in life is an expression of our desire for creativity, both in ourselves and in others.

The Market Rewards Creativity

Part of the dignity, legitimacy, and superiority of the free market is that it encourages creativity in its participants. The amount of creativity in an economy depends on the degree of freedom allowed by that economy. Where there is no reward for creativity, or where creativity is punished, the creative spark dies. A free market produces better, cheaper, and more diverse products and services than a command economy at least partly because the free market both permits and rewards creativity.

Indeed, while a command economy punishes creativity, a free market *demand*s creativity. In today's free market, it is scarcely possible for a company to remain in business without investing in research and development for new products and services. Creativity also finds ways to produce products and services more profitably. Any attempt by a command economy to compel creativ-

ity of its subjects is about as fruitful as trying to *force* an artist to paint beautifully.

Free markets have proven to be wellsprings of technology because free markets, by design, reward creativity. After the collapse of the Communist regimes, is there any remaining doubt about the technological superiority of free market economies? Odd, isn't it, that one of the supposed advantages of command economies was that they would allocate resources more efficiently, and thus excel in technological production? It didn't happen, in part because command economies do not take into account the nature of man. Rather than allowing the strengths in human nature to be freely expressed, command economies imagine that somehow human nature can be forcibly changed through bureaucracy.

The evil in a command economy is that it attacks the image of God in man, in part by denying man an outlet for his creativity. A command economy is the logical outgrowth of a philosophy that denies the divine and attacks the image of God within man. It was entirely consistent for Communism, which forbade (note past tense!) free religious and artistic expression, also to mandate a strictly planned economy.

Technology is not a measure of man's independence from the divine, nor is it a menacing "outside" force that threatens the essential dignity of man. Technology is a product of man's creativity. True, technology can be used as a force for evil, but in free economies the overwhelming impact of technology has been to improve the lot of mankind through increased food production, better medical techniques, and safer, more rewarding work. Technology is an example of what can be accomplished when free men express the image of God within them without the restraint of government. □

The Power of Invention

A TOOL is but the extension of a man's hand, and a machine is but a complex tool. And he that invents a machine augments the power of a man and the well-being of mankind.

—HENRY WARD BEECHER

IDEAS
ON
LIBERTY



Lessons From An Entrepreneur

by David N. Laband

The praise recently showered upon the late Sam Walton suggests that now is an opportune time to question the consistency with which Americans treat successful businessmen and to reaffirm the *universal* applicability of capitalism's Invisible Hand as a "mechanism" to promote consumer welfare.

On March 17 of this year, Sam Walton received the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian honor, from President Bush. Upon Walton's death, the President remembered him as "an American original who embodied the entrepreneurial spirit and epitomized the American dream." Mr. Walton was not lionized by President Bush merely because of his entrepreneurial spirit; millions of Americans have entrepreneurial spirit. What made Sam Walton unique was his spectacular success as an entrepreneurial capitalist. Mr. Walton and his four children have become fabulously wealthy from their creation of over 1,735 Wal-Mart stores and 212 Sam's Wholesale Club warehouses throughout America. They ranked numbers 3-7 on the most recent *Forbes* list of wealthiest Americans.

Sam Walton was an enormously successful free-market capitalist. An appropriate eulogy for him would include thanks for an economic system that rewards individuals who cater to consumers' wishes. The millions of Americans who have patronized his stores and contributed there-

by to his immense wealth would do well to consider the meaning of Sam Walton's success story in terms of international trade.

Our admiration for Sam Walton goes far beyond mere awe of his fortune. Indeed, his great wealth reflects something far more significant. The cavils of anti-free-market fanatics notwithstanding, American consumers *voluntarily* made Sam Walton rich. The same individuals who seek to raise taxes on the rich because of their enviable position in the current income distribution probably buy merchandise at both Wal-Mart and Sam's. They, like many other rational consumers, flock to Wal-Mart stores because of the low prices, the service, and the quality. In short, Sam Walton figuratively built a better mousetrap than his competitors, and with their many billions of dollar-votes American consumers demonstrated that they preferred his product. Those who continued to patronize *other* department stores and shops benefited too, as these stores were forced to lower their prices and improve their product lines and services to remain competitive. The personal wealth amassed by the Walton family pales in comparison to the cumulative benefits Sam Walton generated for virtually all American consumers.

However, in the process of making Sam Walton rich, American consumers impoverished many of Mr. Walton's competitors. Every dollar spent at Wal-Mart was a figurative dollar and a quarter not spent for similar merchandise at Sears, K-Mart, J. C. Penney, or any of the other large chain department stores. Perhaps more importantly, it

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was a dollar and fifty cents not spent at local, small businesses. Some owners of small businesses, unable to take advantage of Wal-Mart's huge economies of scale, sought to prevent Wal-Marts from being built in their local communities. The everyday low-price strategy employed by Wal-Mart would put them out of business, they argued. They were (and continue to be) half-correct. It is true that Wal-Mart's competitors lost business. However, let's get the cause and the effect straight: Wal-Mart never put anybody out of business, *American consumers* did.

Businesses that lose their competitive edge to a more efficient rival have three options. They can: (1) change their product/service mix to reflect more accurately what they do best, (2) exit the market, or (3) petition consumers and/or the state for protection against "unfair competition." The first two responses enhance consumer welfare. To the extent consumers *voluntarily* purchase more expensive, lower-quality goods produced by domestic manufacturers, no self-respecting economist would argue with their choices: *de gustibus non est disputandum*. However, the instant the state regulates to protect domestic firms from "unfair competition," the result is higher prices, reduced choice, and lower quality and service for American consumers.

Shooting the Messenger

Every effort by small businessmen to forestall the building of a Wal-Mart is an attempt to shoot the messenger rather than pay heed to the message. Local economies do not go to pot when Wal-Marts are built. Quite the opposite: Sam Walton once said, "There was a lot more business in those towns than people ever thought."

Without question, each Wal-Mart and Sam's store alters the structure of local unemployment. The sons and daughters of local businessmen and women no longer follow in their parents' proprietary footsteps. Now they, as well as many other local workers, go to work for Uncle Sam (Walton). Thus, the overall rate of local employment is generally not adversely affected. While we may feel sorry for the personal losses suffered by the owners of these no-longer competitive small firms, the aggregate benefits reaped by

(all-too-often forgotten) consumers, including those same small businessmen, outweigh their losses. If this were not true, Sam Walton would never have received the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

The pleas to local zoning boards and planning commissions for protection from "unfair competition" by small businesses faced with the prospect of having to compete with a new Wal-Mart store sound identical to the rhetoric employed by mouthpieces for the Big Three automobile companies, the textile and steel industries, sugar producers, and every other domestic industry seeking to restrict foreign sales of these products in America. To kick Japanese and other foreign producers out of American markets is to deny the benefits of Sam Walton-esque competition.

The negative impact of one business on another in the process of ordinary competition (price, service, quality, product line) is known among academic economists as a "technological externality." Technological externalities are the fingers of Adam Smith's Invisible Hand that guide producers to supply what consumers want, when they want it, at prices equal to cost of production. Any interference with these technological externalities, especially government interference, jeopardizes consumer welfare.

By invoking the rhetoric of "unfair competition," domestic firms seek deliberately to mislead consumers into thinking that protection of competitors is the same thing as protection of competition. Nothing could be further from the truth. Protection of the existing firms in an industry against more efficient competitors, be they American or foreign, insulates those firms from the forces of competition. American consumers are the worse for it: they pay higher prices for shoddier products than would be available in a more competitive environment.

Japan-bashing is equivalent to Sam Walton-bashing. The principles of competition are universal, whether the competitors are domestic or foreign. The fact that sellers are foreign does not diminish the potential gains to American consumers from competition between sellers. If we're going to lionize Sam Walton, consistency demands that we lionize *every* successful producer in the global economy. □

The Toxicity of Environmentalism

by George Reisman

Recently a popular imported mineral water was removed from the market because tests showed that samples of it contained 35 parts per billion of benzene. Although this was an amount so small that only 15 years ago it would have been impossible even to detect, it was assumed that considerations of public health required withdrawal of the product.

Such a case, of course, is not unusual nowadays. The presence of parts per billion of a toxic substance is routinely assumed to be a cause of human deaths. And whenever the number of projected deaths exceeds one in a million, environmentalists demand that the government remove the offending pesticide, preservative, or other alleged bearer of toxic pollution from the market. They do so, even though a level of risk of one in a million is one-third as great as that of an airplane falling from the sky on one's home.

The Toxicity of Environmentalism

While it is not necessary to question the good intentions and sincerity of the overwhelming majority of the members of the environmental or ecology movement, it is vital that the public realize that *in this seemingly lofty and noble*

movement itself can be found more than a little evidence of the most profound toxicity. Consider, for example, the following quotation from David M. Graber, a research biologist with the National Park Service, in his prominently featured *Los Angeles Times* book review of Bill McKibben's *The End of Nature*:

This [man's "remaking the earth by degrees"] makes what is happening no less tragic for those of us who value wildness for its own sake, not for what value it confers upon mankind. I, for one, cannot wish upon either my children or the rest of Earth's biota a tame planet, be it monstrous or—however unlikely—benign. McKibben is a biocentrist, and so am I. We are not interested in the utility of a particular species, or free-flowing river, or ecosystem to mankind. They have intrinsic value, more value—to me—than another human body, or a billion of them.

Human happiness, and certainly human fecundity, are not as important as a wild and healthy planet. I know social scientists who remind me that people are part of nature, but it isn't true. Somewhere along the line—at about a billion years ago, maybe half that—we quit the contract and became a cancer. We have become a plague upon ourselves and upon the Earth.

It is cosmically unlikely that the developed world will choose to end its orgy of fossil-energy consumption, and the Third World its suicidal consumption of landscape. Until such time as *Homo sapiens* should decide to rejoin nature, some of us can only hope for the right virus to come along.¹

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While Mr. Graber openly wishes for the death of a billion people, Mr. McKibben, the author he reviewed, quotes with approval John Muir's benediction to alligators, describing it as a "good epigram" for his own, "humble approach": "Honorable representatives of the great saurians of older creation, may you long enjoy your lilies and rushes, and be blessed now and then with a mouthful of terror-stricken man by way of a dainty."²

Such statements represent pure, unadulterated poison. They express ideas and wishes which, if acted upon, would mean terror and death for enormous numbers of human beings.

These statements, and others like them, are made by prominent members of the environmental movement. The significance of such statements cannot be diminished by ascribing them only to a small fringe of the environmental movement. Indeed, even if such views were indicative of the thinking only of five or ten percent of the members of the environmental movement—the "deep ecology," Earth First! wing—they would represent toxicity in the environmental movement as a whole not at the level of parts per billion or even parts per million, but at the level of *parts per hundred* which, of course, is an enormously higher level of toxicity than is deemed to constitute a danger to human life in virtually every other case in which deadly poison is present.

But the toxicity level of the environmental movement as a whole is substantially greater than even parts per hundred. It is certainly at least at the level of *several parts per ten*. This is obvious from the fact that the mainstream of the environmental movement makes no fundamental or significant criticisms of the likes of Messrs. Graber and McKibben. Indeed, John Muir, whose wish for alligators to "be blessed now and then with a mouthful of terror-stricken man by way of a dainty" McKibben approvingly quotes, *was the founder of the Sierra Club*, which is proud to acknowledge that fact. The Sierra Club, of course, is the leading environmental organization and is supposedly the most respectable of them.

The "Intrinsic" Value of Nature

There is something much more important than the Sierra Club's genealogy, however—something that provides an explanation in terms of *basic principle* as to why the mainstream of the ecology

movement does not attack what might be thought to be merely its fringe. This is a fundamental philosophical premise which the mainstream of the movement shares with the alleged fringe and which logically implies hatred for man and his achievements. Namely, the premise that *nature possesses intrinsic value*—i.e., that nature is valuable in and of itself, apart from all contribution to human life and well-being.

The anti-human premise of nature's intrinsic value goes back, in the Western world, as far as St. Francis of Assisi, who believed in the equality of all living creatures: man, cattle, birds, fish, and reptiles. Indeed, precisely on the basis of this philosophical affinity, and at the wish of the mainstream of the ecology movement, St. Francis of Assisi has been officially declared the patron saint of ecology by the Roman Catholic Church.

The premise of nature's intrinsic value extends to an alleged intrinsic value of forests, rivers, canyons, and hillsides—to everything and anything that is not man. Its influence is present in the Congress of the United States, in such statements as that recently made by Representative Morris Udall of Arizona that a frozen, barren desert in Northern Alaska, where substantial oil deposits appear to exist, is "a sacred place" that should never be given over to oil rigs and pipelines. It is present in the supporting statement of a representative of the Wilderness Society that "There is a need to protect the land not just for wildlife and human recreation, but just to have it there." It has, of course, also been present in the sacrifice of the interests of human beings for the sake of snail darters and spotted owls.

The idea of nature's intrinsic value inexorably implies a desire to destroy man and his works because it implies a perception of man *as the systematic destroyer of the good, and thus as the systematic doer of evil*. Just as man perceives coyotes, wolves, and rattlesnakes as evil because they regularly destroy the cattle and sheep he values as sources of food and clothing, so, on the premise of nature's intrinsic value, the environmentalists view man as evil, because, in the pursuit of his well-being, man systematically destroys the wildlife, jungles, and rock formations that the environmentalists hold to be intrinsically valuable. Indeed, from the perspective of such alleged intrinsic values of nature, the degree of man's alleged destructiveness and evil is directly in proportion to his

loyalty to his essential nature. Man is the rational being. It is his application of his reason in the form of science, technology, and an industrial civilization that enables him to act on nature on the enormous scale on which he now does. Thus, it is his possession and use of reason—manifested in his technology and industry—for which he is hated.

The doctrine of intrinsic value is itself only a rationalization for a pre-existing hatred of man. It is invoked not because one attaches any actual value to what is alleged to have intrinsic value, but simply to serve as a pretext for denying values to man. For example, caribou feed upon vegetation, wolves eat caribou, and microbes attack wolves. Each of these, the vegetation, the caribou, the wolves, and the microbes, is alleged by the environmentalists to possess intrinsic value. Yet absolutely no course of action is indicated for man. Should man act to protect the intrinsic value of the vegetation from destruction by the caribou? Should he act to protect the intrinsic value of the caribou from destruction by the wolves? Should he act to protect the intrinsic value of the wolves from destruction by the microbes? Even though each of these alleged intrinsic values is at stake, man is not called upon to do anything. When does the doctrine of intrinsic value serve as a guide to what man should do? Only when man comes to attach value to something. Then it is invoked to deny him the value he seeks. For example, the intrinsic value of nature is invoked as a guide to man's action only when there is something man wants, such as oil, and then, as in the case of Northern Alaska, its invocation serves to stop him from having it. In other words, *the doctrine of the intrinsic value of nature is nothing but a doctrine of the negation of human values*. It is pure nihilism.

It should be realized that it is logically implicit in what has just been said that to establish a public office, such as that recently proposed in California, of "environmental advocate," would be tantamount to establishing an office of Negator of Human Value. The work of such an office would be to stop man from achieving his values for no other reason than that he was man and wanted to achieve them.

Of course, the environmental movement is not pure poison. Very few people would listen to it if it were. As I have said, it is poisonous only at the level of several parts per ten. Mixed in with the poison and overlaying it as a kind of sugar coating is the

advocacy of many measures which have the avowed purpose of promoting human life and well-being, and among these some that considered in isolation, might actually achieve that purpose. The problem is that the mixture is poisonous. And thus, when one swallows environmentalism, one inescapably swallows poison.

Given the underlying nihilism of the movement, it is not possible to accept at face value any of the claims it makes of seeking to improve human life and well-being, especially when following its recommendations would impose on people great deprivation or cost. Indeed, nothing could be more absurd or dangerous than to take advice on how to improve one's life and well-being from those who wish one dead and whose satisfaction comes from human terror, which, of course, as I have shown, is precisely what is wished in the environmental movement—openly and on principle. This conclusion, it must be stressed, applies irrespective of the scientific or academic credentials of an individual. If an alleged scientific expert believes in the intrinsic value of nature, then to seek his advice is equivalent to seeking the advice of a medical doctor who was on the side of the germs rather than of the patient. Obviously, Congressional committees taking testimony from alleged expert witnesses on the subject of proposed environmental legislation need to be aware of this fact and never to forget it.

Errors and Panics

Not surprisingly, in virtually every case, the claims made by the environmentalists have turned out to be false or simply absurd. Consider, for example, the recent case of Alar, a chemical spray used for many years on apples in order to preserve their color and freshness. Here, it turned out that even if the environmentalists' claims had actually been true, and the use of Alar would result in 4.2 deaths per million over a 70-year lifetime, all that would have been signified was that eating apples sprayed with Alar would then have been *less dangerous than driving to the supermarket to buy the apples!* (Consider: 4.2 deaths per million over a seventy-year period means that in any one year in the United States, with its population of roughly two hundred and fifty million people, approximately *fifteen* deaths would be attributable to Alar! This is the result obtained by multiplying 4.2 per million times 250 million and then dividing by

70. In the same one-year period of time, approximately 50,000 deaths occur in motor vehicle accidents in the United States, most of them within a few miles of the victims' homes, and undoubtedly far more than fifteen of them on trips to or from supermarkets.) Nevertheless, a panic ensued, followed by a plunge in the sale of apples, the financial ruin of an untold number of apple growers, and the virtual disappearance of Alar.

Before the panic over Alar, there was the panic over asbestos. According to *Forbes* magazine, it turns out that in the forms in which it is normally used in the United States, asbestos is *one-third as likely to be the cause of death as being struck by lightning*.³

Then there is the alleged damage to lakes caused by acid rain. According to *Policy Review*, it turns out that the acidification of the lakes has not been the result of acid rain, but of the cessation of logging operations in the affected areas and thus the absence of the alkaline run-off produced by such operations. This run-off had made naturally acidic lakes non-acidic for a few generations.⁴

Besides these cases, there were the hysterias over dioxin in the ground at Times Beach, Missouri, TCE in the drinking water of Woburn, Massachusetts, the chemicals in Love Canal, and radiation at Three Mile Island. According to professor Bruce Ames, one of the world's leading experts on cancer, it turned out that the amount of dioxin that anyone would have absorbed in Times Beach was far less than the amount required to do any harm and that, indeed, the actual harm to Times Beach residents from dioxin was less than that of drinking a glass of beer.⁵ (The Environmental Protection Agency itself subsequently reduced its estimate of the danger from dioxin by a factor of fifteen-sixteenths.) In the case of Woburn, according to Ames, it turned out the cluster of leukemia cases which occurred there was statistically random and that the drinking water there was actually above the national average in safety, and not, as had been claimed, the cause of the leukemia cases. In the case of Love Canal, Ames reports, it turned out upon investigation that the cancer rate among the former residents has been no higher than average. (It is necessary to use the phrase "former residents" because the town lost most of its population in the panic and forced evacuation caused by the environmentalists' claims.) In the case of Three Mile Island, not a single resident has died, nor

even received an additional exposure to radiation, as the result of the accident there. In addition, according to studies reported in *The New York Times*, the cancer rate among residents there is no higher than normal and has not risen.⁶

Before these hysterias, there were claims alleging the death of Lake Erie and mercury poisoning in tuna fish. All along, Lake Erie has been very much alive and was even producing near record quantities of fish at the very time the claims of its death were being made. The mercury in the tuna fish was the result of the natural presence of mercury in sea water; and evidence provided by museums showed that similar levels of mercury had been present in tuna fish since prehistoric times.

And now, in yet another overthrow of the environmentalists' claims, a noted climatologist, Professor Robert Pease, has shown that it is impossible for chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) to destroy large quantities of ozone in the stratosphere because relatively few of them are even capable of reaching the stratosphere in the first place. He also shows that the celebrated ozone "hole" over Antarctica every fall is a phenomenon of nature, in existence since long before CFCs were invented, and results largely from the fact that during the long Antarctic night ultraviolet sunlight is not present to create fresh ozone.⁷

Pseudo-Science

The reason that one after another of the environmentalists' claims turn out to be proven wrong is that they are made without any regard for truth in the first place. In making their claims, the environmentalists reach for whatever is at hand that will serve to frighten people, make them lose confidence in science and technology, and, ultimately, lead them to deliver themselves up to the environmentalists' tender mercies. The claims rest on unsupported conjectures and wild leaps of imagination, from scintillas of fact to arbitrary conclusions, by means of evasion and the drawing of invalid inferences. It is absurd to leap from findings about the effects of feeding rats or mice dosages the equivalent of a hundred or more times what any human being would ever ingest, and then draw inferences about the effects on people consuming normal quantities. Fears of parts per billion of this or that chemical causing single-digit deaths per million do not rest on science, but on

imagination. Such claims have nothing to do either with actual experimentation or with the concept of causality.

No one ever has, can, or will observe such a thing as two groups of a million people identical in all respects except that over a 70-year period the members of one of the groups consume apples sprayed with Alar, while the members of the other group do not, and then 4.2 members of the first group die. The process by which such a conclusion is reached, and its degree of actual scientific seriousness, is essentially the same as that of a college students' bull session, which consists of practically nothing but arbitrary assumptions, manipulations, guesses, and plain hot air. In such a session, one might start with the known consequences of a quarter-ton safe falling ten stories onto the head of an unfortunate passerby below, and from there go on to speculate about the conceivable effects in a million cases of other passers-by happening to drop from their hand or mouth an M&M or a peanut on their shoe, and come to the conclusion that 4.2 of them will die.

Furthermore, as indicated, in contrast to the procedures of a bull session, reason and actual science establish causes which, in their nature, are universal. When, for example, genuine causes of death, such as arsenic, strychnine, or bullets, attack vital organs of the human body, death is certain to result, in *all but* a handful of cases per million. When something is in fact the cause of some effect, it is so *in each and every case* in which specified conditions prevail, and fails to be so only in cases in which the specified conditions are not present, such as a person's having built up a tolerance to poison or wearing a bulletproof vest. Such claims as a thousand different things each causing cancer in a handful of cases are proof of nothing but that the actual causes are not yet known—and, beyond that, an indication of the breakdown of the epistemology of contemporary science. (This epistemological breakdown, I might add, rapidly accelerated in the 1960s when the government took over most of the scientific research in the United States and began the large-scale financing of statistical studies as a substitute for the discovery of causes.)

In making their claims, the environmentalists willfully ignore such facts as that carcinogens, poisons, and radiation exist in nature. Fully half of the chemicals found in nature are carcinogenic when

fed to animals in massive quantities—the same proportion as applies to man-made chemicals when fed in massive quantities. (The cause of the resulting cancers, according to Professor Ames, is actually not the chemicals, either natural or man-made, but the repeated destruction of tissue caused by the massively excessive doses in which the chemicals are fed, such as saccharin being fed to rats in a quantity comparable to humans drinking eight hundred cans of diet soda a day.) Arsenic, one of the deadliest poisons, is a naturally occurring chemical element. Oleander, one of the most beautiful plants, is also a deadly poison, as are many other plants and herbs. Radium and uranium, with all their radioactivity, are found in nature. Indeed, all of nature is radioactive to some degree. If the environmentalists did not close their eyes to what exists in nature, if they did not associate every negative exclusively with man, if they applied to nature the standards of safety they claim to be necessary in the case of man's activities, they would have to run in terror from nature. They would have to use one-half of the world to construct protective containers or barriers against all the allegedly deadly carcinogens, toxins, and radioactive material that constitute the other half of the world.

It would be a profound mistake to dismiss the repeatedly false claims of the environmentalists merely as a case of the little boy who cried wolf. They are a case of the *wolf* crying again and again about alleged dangers to the little boy. The only real danger is to listen to the wolf.

Direct evidence of the willful dishonesty of the environmental movement comes from one of its leading representatives, Stephen Schneider, who is well-known for his predictions of global catastrophe. In the October 1989 issue of *Discover* magazine, he is quoted (with approval) as follows: "... To do this, we need to get some broad-based support, to capture the public's imagination. That, of course, entails getting loads of media coverage. So we have to offer up scary scenarios, make simplified, dramatic statements, and make little mention of any doubts we may have. This 'double ethical bind' we frequently find ourselves in cannot be solved by any formula. Each of us has to decide what the right balance is between being effective and being honest."

Thus, in the absence of verification by sources totally independent of the environmental move-

ment and free of its taint, all of its claims of seeking to improve human life and well-being in this or that specific way must be regarded simply as lies, having the actual purpose of inflicting needless deprivation or suffering. In the category of malicious lies fall all of the environmental movement's claims about our having to abandon industrial civilization or any significant part of it in order to cope with the dangers of alleged global warming, ozone depletion, or exhaustion of natural resources. Indeed, all claims constituting denunciations of science, technology, or industrial civilization which are advanced in the name of service to human life and well-being are tantamount to claiming that our survival and well-being depend on our abandonment of reason. (Science, technology, and industry are leading products of reason and are inseparable from it.) All such claims should be taken as nothing but further proof of the environmental movement's hatred of man's nature and man's life, certainly not of any actual danger to human life and well-being.

Which Environment?

It is important to realize that when the environmentalists talk about destruction of the "environment" as the result of economic activity, their claims are permeated by the doctrine of intrinsic value. Thus, what they actually mean to a very great extent is merely the destruction of alleged intrinsic values in nature such as jungles, deserts, rock formations, and animal species which are either of no value to man or hostile to man. That is their concept of the "environment." If, in contrast to the environmentalists, one means by "environment" *the surroundings of man*—the external material conditions of human life—then it becomes clear that all of man's productive activities have the inherent tendency to *improve* his environment—indeed, that that is their essential purpose.

This becomes obvious if one realizes that the entire world physically consists of nothing but chemical elements. These elements are never destroyed. They simply reappear in different combinations, in different proportions, in different places. Apart from what has been lost in a few rockets, the quantity of every chemical element in the world today is the same as it was before the Industrial Revolution. The only difference is that, because of the Industrial Revolution, instead of

lying dormant, out of man's control, the chemical elements have been moved about as never before, in such a way as to improve human life and well-being. For instance, some part of the world's iron and copper has been moved from the interior of the earth, where it was useless, to construct buildings, bridges, automobiles, and a million and one other things of benefit to human life. Some part of the world's carbon, oxygen, and hydrogen has been separated from certain compounds and recombined in others, in the process releasing energy to heat and light homes, power industrial machinery, fuel automobiles, airplanes, ships, and trains, and in countless other ways serve human life. It follows that insofar as man's environment consists of the chemical elements iron, copper, carbon, oxygen, and hydrogen, and his productive activity makes them useful to himself in these ways, his environment is correspondingly improved.

All that *all* of man's productive activities fundamentally consist of is in the rearrangement of nature-given chemical elements for the purpose of making them stand in a more useful relationship to himself—that is, for the purpose of improving his environment.

Consider further examples. To live, man needs to be able to move his person and his goods from place to place. If an untamed forest stands in his way, such movement is difficult or impossible. It represents an improvement in his environment, therefore, when man moves the chemical elements that constitute some of the trees of the forest somewhere else and lays down the chemical elements brought from somewhere else to constitute a road. It is an improvement in his environment when man builds bridges, digs canals, opens mines, clears land, constructs factories and houses, or does anything else that represents an improvement in the external, material conditions of his life. All of these things represent an improvement in man's material surroundings—his environment. All of them represent the rearrangement of nature's elements in a way that makes them stand in a more useful relationship to human life and well-being.

Thus, all economic activity has as its sole purpose the improvement of the environment—it aims exclusively at the improvement of the external, material conditions of human life. Production and economic activity are precisely the means by

which man adapts his environment to himself and thereby improves it.

So much for the environmentalists' claims about man's destruction of the environment. Only from the perspective of the alleged intrinsic value of nature and the nonvalue of man can man's improvement of his environment be termed destruction of the environment.

The environmentalists' recent claims about the impending destruction of the "planet" are entirely the result of the influence of the intrinsic-value doctrine. What the environmentalists are actually afraid of is not that the planet or its ability to support human life will be destroyed, but that the increase in its ability to support human life will destroy its still extensively existing "wildness." They cannot bear the thought of the earth's becoming fully subject to man's control, with its jungles and deserts replaced by farms, pastures, and forests planted by man, as man wills. They cannot bear the thought of the earth's becoming man's garden. In the words of McKibben, "The problem is that nature, the independent force that has surrounded us since our earliest days, cannot coexist with our numbers and our habits. *We may well be able to create a world that can support our numbers and our habits*, but it will be an artificial world . . ." (italics supplied).⁸

The Virtue of Separation

The toxic character of the environmental movement implies the observance of a vital principle in connection with any measures which the movement advocates and which might actually promote human life and well-being, such as those calling for the reduction of smog, the cleaning up of rivers, lakes, and beaches, and so forth. The principle is that even here one must not make common cause with the environmental movement in any way. One must be scrupulously careful not to advocate even anything that is genuinely good, under its auspices or banner. To do so is to promote its evil—to become contaminated with its poison and to spread its poison. In the hands of the environmentalists, concern even with such genuine problems as smog and polluted rivers serves as a weapon with which to attack industrial civilization. The environmentalists proceed as though problems of filth emanated from industrial civilization, as though filth were not the all-pervasive con-

dition of human life in pre-industrial societies, and as though industrial civilization represented a decline from more healthful conditions of the past.

The principle of non-cooperation with the environmental movement, of the most radical differentiation from it, must be followed in order to avoid the kind of disastrous consequences brought about earlier in this century by people in Russia and Germany who began as basically innocent and with good intentions. Even though the actual goals and programs of the Communists and Nazis were no secret, many people did not realize that such pronouncements and their underlying philosophy must be taken seriously. As a result, they joined with the Communists or Nazis in efforts to achieve what they believed were worthy specific goals, above all goals falling under the head of the alleviation of poverty. But working side by side with the likes of Lenin and Stalin or Hitler and Himmler did not achieve the kind of life these people had hoped to achieve. It did, however, serve to achieve the bloody goals of those monsters. And along the way, those who may have started out innocently enough very quickly lost their innocence and to varying degrees ended up simply as accomplices of the monsters.

Evil needs the cooperation of the good to disguise its nature and to gain numbers and influence it could never achieve on its own. Thus, the doctrine of intrinsic value needs to be mixed as much as possible with alleged concern for man's life and well-being. In allowing themselves to participate in advancing the cause of the mixture, otherwise good people serve to promote the doctrine of intrinsic value and thus the destruction of human values.

Already large numbers of otherwise good people have been enlisted in the environmentalists' campaign to throttle the production of energy. This is a campaign which, to the degree that it succeeds, can only cause human deprivation and the substitution of man's limited muscle power for the power of motors and engines. It is actually a campaign which seeks nothing less than the undoing of the Industrial Revolution, and the return to the poverty, filth, and misery of earlier centuries.

The Anti-Industrial Revolution

The essential feature of the Industrial Revolution is the use of *man-made power*. To the relatively feeble muscles of draft animals and the still

more feeble muscles of human beings, and to the relatively small amounts of usable power available from nature in the form of wind and falling water, the Industrial Revolution added man-made power. It did so first in the form of steam generated by the combustion of coal, and later in the form of internal combustion based on petroleum, and electric power based on the burning of any fossil fuel or on atomic energy.

This man-made power is the essential basis of all of the economic improvements achieved over the last two hundred years. Its application is what enables us human beings to accomplish with our arms and hands the amazing productive results we do accomplish. To the feeble powers of our arms and hands is added the enormously greater power released by these sources of energy. Energy use, the productivity of labor, and the standard of living are inseparably connected, with the two last entirely dependent on the first.

Thus, it is not surprising, for example, that the United States enjoys the world's highest standard of living. This is a direct result of the fact that the United States has the world's highest energy consumption per capita. The United States, more than any other country, is the country where intelligent human beings have arranged for motor-driven machinery to accomplish results for them. All further substantial increases in the productivity of labor and standard of living, both here in the United States and across the world, will be equally dependent on man-made power and the growing consumption of energy it makes possible. Our ability to accomplish more and more with the same limited muscular powers of our limbs will depend entirely on our ability to augment them further and further with the aid of still more such energy.

In total opposition to the Industrial Revolution and all the marvelous results it has accomplished, the essential goal of environmentalism is to block the increase in one source of man-made power after another and ultimately to roll back the production of man-made power to the point of virtual nonexistence, thereby undoing the Industrial Revolution and returning the world to the economic Dark Ages. There is to be no atomic power. According to the environmentalists, it represents the death ray. There is also to be no power based on fossil fuels. According to the environmentalists, it causes "pollution," and now global warm-

ing, and must therefore be given up. There is not even to be significant hydro-power. According to the environmentalists, the building of the necessary dams destroys intrinsically valuable wildlife habitat.

Only three things are to be permitted as sources of energy, according to the environmentalists. Two of them, "solar power" and power from windmills, are, as far as can be seen, utterly impracticable as significant sources of energy. If, somehow they became practicable, the environmentalists would undoubtedly find grounds for attacking them. The third allowable source of energy, "conservation," is a contradiction in terms. "Conservation" is *not* a source of energy. Its actual meaning is simply using less. Conservation is a source of energy for one use only at the price of deprivation of energy use somewhere else.

The environmentalists' campaign against energy calls to mind the image of a boa constrictor entwining itself about the body of its victim and slowly squeezing the life out of him. There can be no other result for the economic system of the industrialized world but enfeeblement and ultimately death if its supplies of energy are progressively choked off.

Large numbers of people have been enlisted in the campaign against energy out of fear that the average mean temperature of the world may rise a few degrees in the next century, mainly as the result of the burning of fossil fuels. If this were really to be so, the only appropriate response would be to be sure that more and better air conditioners were available. (Similarly, if there were in fact to be some reduction in the ozone layer, the appropriate response, to avoid the additional cases of skin cancer that would allegedly occur from exposure to more intense sunlight, would be to be sure that there were more sunglasses, hats, and sun-tan lotion available.) It would *not* be to seek to throttle and destroy industrial civilization.

If one did not understand its underlying motivation, the environmental movement's resort to the fear of global warming might appear astonishing in view of all the previous fears the movement has professed. These fears, in case anyone has forgotten, have concerned the alleged onset of a *new ice age* as the result of the same industrial development that is now supposed to result in global warming, and the alleged creation of a "nuclear

winter” as the result of man’s use of atomic explosives.

The words of Paul Ehrlich and his incredible claims in connection with the “greenhouse effect” should be recalled. In the first wave of ecological hysteria, this “scientist” declared:

“At the moment we cannot predict what the overall climatic results will be of our using the atmosphere as a garbage dump. We do know that very small changes in either direction in the average temperature of the Earth could be very serious. With a few degrees of cooling, a new ice age might be upon us, with rapid and drastic effects on the agricultural productivity of the temperate regions. With a few degrees of heating, the polar ice caps would melt, perhaps raising ocean levels 250 feet. Gondola to the Empire State Building, anyone?”⁹

The 250-foot rise in the sea level projected by Ehrlich as the result of global warming has been scaled back somewhat. According to McKibben, the “worst case scenario” is now supposed to be eleven feet, by the year 2100, with something less than seven feet considered more likely. According to a United Nations panel of alleged scientists, it is supposed to be 25.6 inches. (Even this still more modest projection did not stop the UN panel from calling for an immediate 60 percent reduction in carbon-dioxide emissions to try to prevent it.)

Perhaps of even greater significance is the continuous and profound distrust of science and technology that the environmental movement displays. The environmental movement maintains that science and technology cannot be relied upon to build a safe atomic power plant, to produce a pesticide that is safe, or even to bake a loaf of bread that is safe, if that loaf of bread contains chemical preservatives. When it comes to global warming, however, it turns out that there is one area in which the environmental movement displays the most breathtaking confidence in the reliability of science and technology, an area in which, until recently, no one—not even the staunchest supporters of science and technology—had ever thought to assert very much confidence at all. The one thing, the environmental movement holds, that science and technology can do so well that we are entitled to have unlimited confidence in them is *forecast the weather*—for the next one hundred years!

It is, after all, supposedly on the basis of a

weather forecast that we are being asked to abandon the Industrial Revolution, or, as it is euphemistically put, “to radically and profoundly change the way in which we live”—to our enormous material detriment.

Very closely connected with this is something else that might appear amazing. This concerns prudence and caution. No matter what the assurances of scientists and engineers, based in every detail on the best established laws of physics—about backup systems, fail-safe systems, containment buildings as strong as U-boat pens, defenses in depth, and so on—when it comes to atomic power, the environmental movement is unwilling to gamble on the unborn children of fifty generations hence being exposed to harmful radiation. But on the strength of a weather forecast, it is willing to wreck the economic system of the modern world—to literally throw away industrial civilization. (The 60 percent reduction in carbon dioxide emissions urged by that United Nations panel would be utterly devastating in itself, totally apart from all the further such measures that would surely follow it.)

The meaning of this insanity is that industrial civilization is to be abandoned because this is what must be done to *avoid bad weather*. All right, very bad weather. If we destroy the energy base needed to produce and operate the construction equipment required to build strong, well-made, comfortable houses for hundreds of millions of people, we shall be safer from the wind and rain, the environmental movement alleges, than if we retain and enlarge that energy base. If we destroy our capacity to produce and operate refrigerators and air conditioners, we shall be better protected from hot weather than if we retain and enlarge that capacity, the environmental movement claims. If we destroy our capacity to produce and operate tractors and harvesters, to can and freeze food, to build and operate hospitals and produce medicines, we shall secure our food supply and our health better than if we retain and enlarge that capacity, the environmental movement asserts.

There is actually a remarkable new principle implied here, concerning how man can cope with his environment. Instead of our taking action upon nature, as we have always believed we must do, we shall henceforth control the forces of nature more to our advantage by means of our *inaction*. Indeed, if we do not act, no significant threatening forces

of nature will arise! The threatening forces of nature are not the product of nature, but of *us*! Thus speaks the environmental movement.

All of the insanities of the environmental movement become intelligible when one grasps the nature of the destructive motivation behind them. They are not uttered in the interest of man's life and well-being, but for the purpose of leading him to self-destruction.

Free Market Solutions to Environmental Problems

It must be stressed that even if global warming turned out to be a fact, the free citizens of an industrial civilization would have no great difficulty in coping with it—that is, of course, if their ability to use energy and to produce is not crippled by the environmental movement and by government controls otherwise inspired. The seeming difficulties of coping with global warming, or any other large-scale change, arise only when the problem is viewed from the perspective of government central planners.

It would be too great a problem for government bureaucrats to handle (as is the production even of an adequate supply of wheat or nails—as the experience of the whole socialist world has so eloquently shown). But it would certainly not be too great a problem for tens and hundreds of millions of free-thinking individuals living under capitalism to solve. It would be solved by means of each individual being free to decide how best to cope with the particular aspects of global warming that affected him. Individuals would decide, on the basis of profit-and-loss calculations, what changes they needed to make in their businesses and in their personal lives, in order best to adjust to the situation. They would decide where it was now relatively more desirable to own land, locate farms and businesses, and live and work, and where it was relatively less desirable, and what new comparative advantages each location had for the production of which goods. The essential thing they would require is the freedom to serve their self-interests by buying land and moving their businesses to the areas rendered relatively more attractive, and the freedom to seek employment and buy or rent housing in those areas.

Given this freedom, the totality of the problem would be overcome. This is because, under capital-

ism, the actions of the individuals, and the thinking and planning behind those actions, are coordinated and harmonized by the price system (as many former central planners of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union have come to learn). As a result, the problem would be solved in exactly the same way that tens and hundreds of millions of free individuals have solved much greater problems, such as redesigning the economic system to deal with the replacement of the horse by the automobile, the settlement of the American West, and the release of the far greater part of the labor of the economic system from agriculture to industry.

Indeed, it would probably turn out that if the necessary adjustments were allowed to be made, global warming, if it actually came, would prove highly beneficial to mankind on net balance. For example, there is evidence suggesting that it would postpone the onset of the next ice age by a thousand years or more and that the higher level of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, which is supposed to cause the warming process, would be highly beneficial to agriculture.

Whether global warming comes or not, it is certain that nature itself will sooner or later produce major changes in the climate. To deal with those changes and virtually all other changes arising from whatever cause, man absolutely requires individual freedom, science, and technology. In a word, he requires the industrial civilization constituted by capitalism.

This brings me back to the possibly truly good objectives that have been mixed in with environmentalism, such as the desire for greater cleanliness and health. If one wants to advocate such objectives without aiding the potential mass murderers in the environmental movement in achieving their goals, one must first of all accept unreservedly the values of human reason, science, technology, and industrial civilization, and never attack those values. They are the indispensable foundation for achieving greater cleanliness and health and longer life.

In the last two centuries, loyalty to these values has enabled man in the Western world to put an end to famines and plagues, and to eliminate the once dread diseases of cholera, diphtheria, smallpox, tuberculosis, and typhoid fever, among others. Famine has been ended, because the industrial civilization so hated by the environmentalists has produced the greatest abundance and variety of

food in the history of the world, and created the transportation system required to bring it to everyone. This same hated civilization has produced the iron and steel pipe, and the chemical purification and pumping systems that enable everyone to have instant access to safe drinking water, hot or cold, every minute of the day. It has produced the sewage systems and the automobiles that have removed the filth of human and animal waste from the streets of cities and towns.

Such improvements, together with the enormous reduction in fatigue and exhaustion made possible by the use of labor-saving machinery, have resulted in a radical reduction in mortality and increase in life expectancy, from less than thirty years before the beginning of the Industrial Revolution to more than 75 years currently. By the same token, the average newborn American child today has a greater chance of living to age 65 than the average newborn child of a nonindustrial society has of living to age five.

In the earlier years of the Industrial Revolution, the process of improvement was accompanied by the presence of coal dust in towns and cities, which people willingly accepted as the by-product of not having to freeze and of being able to have all the other advantages of an industrial society. Subsequent advances, in the form of electricity and natural gas, have radically reduced this problem. Those who seek further advances along these lines should advocate the freedom of development of atomic power, which emits no particulate matter of any kind into the atmosphere. Atomic power, however, is the form of power most hated by the environmentalists.

Also essential for further improvements in cleanliness and health, and for the long-term availability of natural resources, is the extension of private ownership of the means of production, especially of land and natural resources. The incentive of private owners is to use their property in ways that maximize its long-term value and, wherever possible, to improve their property. Consistent with this fact, one should seek ways of extending the principle of private ownership to lakes, rivers, beaches, and even to portions of the ocean. Privately owned lakes, rivers, and beaches would almost certainly be clean lakes, rivers, and beaches. Privately owned, electronically fenced ocean ranches would guarantee abundant supplies of almost everything useful that is found in or

beneath the sea. Certainly, the vast land holdings of the United States government in the western states and in Alaska should be privatized.

But what is most important in the present context, in which the environmental movement is operating almost unopposed, is that anyone who is afraid of becoming physically contaminated by exposure to one or another alleged toxic chemical should take heed that he does not place an indelible stain on his very existence through his exposure to the deadly poison of the environmental movement. This is what one is in danger of doing by ingesting the propaganda of the environmental movement and being guided by it. I do not know of anything worse that anyone can do, than having been born into the greatest material civilization in the history of the world, now to take part in its destruction by cooperation with the environmental movement, and thus be a party to untold misery and death in the decades and generations to come.

By the same token, there are few things better that one can do, than having become aware of what is involved, take one's stand with the values on which human life and well-being depend. This is something which, unfortunately, one must be prepared to do with few companions in today's world. The great majority of those who should be fighting for human values—the professional intellectuals—either do not know enough to do so, have become afraid to do so, or, still worse, have themselves become the enemies of human values and are actively working on the side of environmentalism.

The Treason of the Intellectuals

It is important to explain why there are so few intellectuals prepared to fight environmentalism and why there are so many who are on its side.

I believe that to an important extent the hatred of man and distrust of reason displayed by the environmental movement is a psychological projection of many contemporary intellectuals' self-hatred and distrust of their own minds arising as the result of their having been responsible for the destruction wrought by socialism. As the parties responsible for socialism, they have certainly been "a plague upon the world," and if socialism had in fact represented reason and science, as they continue to choose to believe, there would be grounds to distrust reason and science.

In my judgment, the “green” movement of the environmentalists is merely the old “red” movement of the communists and socialists shorn of its veneer of science. The only difference I see between the greens and the reds is the superficial one of the specific reasons for which they want to violate individual liberty and the pursuit of happiness. The reds claimed that the individual could not be left free because the result would be such things as “exploitation” and “monopoly.” The greens claim that the individual cannot be left free because the result will be such things as destruction of the ozone layer and global warming. Both claim that centralized government control over economic activity is essential. The reds wanted it for the alleged sake of achieving human prosperity. The greens want it for the alleged sake of avoiding environmental damage. In my view, environmentalism and ecology are nothing but the intellectual death rattle of socialism in the West, the final convulsion of a movement that only a few decades ago eagerly looked forward to the results of paralyzing the actions of individuals by means of “social engineering” and now seeks to paralyze the actions of individuals by means of prohibiting engineering of any kind. The greens, I think, may be a cut below the reds, if that is possible.

While the collapse of socialism is an important precipitating factor in the rise of environmentalism, there are other, more fundamental causes as well.

Environmentalism is the leading manifestation of the rising tide of irrationalism that is engulfing our culture. Over the last two centuries, the reliability of reason as a means of knowledge has been under a constant attack led by a series of philosophers from Immanuel Kant to Bertrand Russell. As a result, a growing loss of confidence in reason has taken place. As a further result, the philosophical status of man as the being who is distinguished by the possession of reason has been in decline. In the last two generations, as the effects of this process have more and more reached the general public, confidence in the reliability of reason, and the philosophical status of man, have declined so far that now virtually no basis is any longer recognized for a radical differentiation between man and animals. This is the explanation of the fact that the doctrine of St. Francis of Assisi and the environmentalists concerning the equality between man and animals is now accepted with virtually no opposition.

The readiness of people to accept the closely connected doctrine of intrinsic value is also a consequence of the growing irrationalism. An “intrinsic value” is a value that one accepts without any reason, without asking questions. It is a “value” designed for people who do what they are told and who do not think. A rational value, in contrast, is a value one accepts only on the basis of understanding how it serves the self-evidently desirable ultimate end that is constituted by one’s own life and happiness.

The cultural decline of reason has created the growing hatred and hostility on which environmentalism feeds, as well as the unreasoning fears of its leaders and followers. To the degree that people abandon reason, they must feel terror before reality, because they have no way of dealing with it other than reason. By the same token, their frustrations mount, since reason is their only means of solving problems and achieving the results they want to achieve. In addition, the abandonment of reason leads to more and more suffering as the result of others’ irrationality, including their use of physical force. Thus, in the conditions of a collapse of rationality, frustrations and feelings of hatred and hostility rapidly multiply, while cool judgment, rational standards, and civilized behavior vanish. In such a cultural environment, monstrous ideologies appear and monsters in human form emerge alongside them, ready to put them into practice. The environmental movement, of course, is just such a movement.

But if, because of these reasons, there are no longer many intellectuals ready to take up the fight for human values—in essence, for the value of the intellect, for man the rational being and for the industrial civilization he has created and requires—then all the greater is the credit for whoever is willing to stand up for these values now and, in so doing, don the mantle of intellectual.

The Role of the New Intellectuals

There is certainly ample work for such “new intellectuals” to do. At one level, the work directly concerns the issue of environmentalism.

The American people must be made aware of what environmentalism actually stands for and of what they stand to lose, and have already lost, as the result of its growing influence. They must be made aware of the environmental movement’s



BETH R. BOWLEY

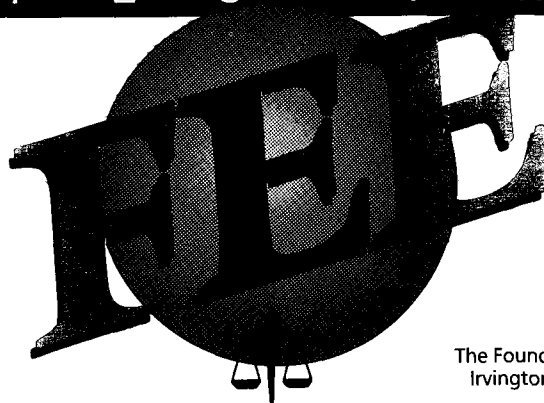
The now-deserted offices of the former Johns Manville Company in New Jersey.

responsibility for the energy crisis and the accompanying high price of oil and oil products, which is the result of its systematic and highly successful campaign against additional energy supplies. They must be made aware of its consequent responsibility for the enrichment of Arab sheiks at the expense of the impoverishment of hundreds of millions of people around the world, including many millions here in the United States. They must be made aware of its responsibility for the vastly increased wealth, power, and influence of terrorist governments in the Middle East, stemming from the high price of oil it has caused, and for the resulting need to fight a war in the region.

The American people must be made aware of how the environmental movement has steadily made life more difficult for them. They must be shown how, as the result of its existence, people have been prevented from taking one necessary and relatively simple action after another, such as building power plants and roads, extending airport runways, and even establishing new garbage dumps. They must be shown how the history of the environmental movement is a history of destruction: the destruction of the atomic power industry,

of the Johns Manville Company, of cranberry growers and apple growers, of sawmills and logging companies, of paper mills, of metal smelters, of coal miners, of steel mills, of tuna fishermen, of oil fields and oil refineries—to name only those which come readily to mind. They must be shown how the environmental movement has been the cause of the wanton violation of private property rights and thereby of untold thousands of acres of land not being developed for the benefit of human beings, and thus of countless homes and factories not being built. They must be shown how as the result of all the necessary actions it prohibits or makes more expensive, the environmental movement has been a major cause of the marked deterioration in the conditions in which many people now must live their lives in the United States—that it is the cause of families' earning less and having to pay more, and, as a result, being deprived of the ability to own their own homes or even to get by at all without having to work a good deal harder than used to be necessary.

In sum, the American people need to be shown how the actual nature of the environmental movement is that of a *virulent pest*, consistently coming



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September 1992

THE POVERTY OF POLITICS

In ages past politics was an art built on the great principles of political wisdom, as in the laws of Moses and the precepts of the Founding Fathers. A politician was a person knowledgeable and skilled in the application of these principles to the processes of government and the political institutions. In recent years, under the influence of alien thought, politics has become a science of self-interest and political logrolling, that is, trading of political influence or votes to achieve passage of laws favoring one another. To be an engineer you must study engineering; to be a doctor you must study medicine; but to be a politician you merely need to know your own interests and those of your voters and backers.

Two kinds of people generally do well in politics: men and women who willingly comply with the wishes of the most powerful interest group, and those who blindly obey their superiors in the hierarchy of political power. Compliance and obedience assure re-election and all the fringe benefits thereof. Ninety-eight percent of all incumbents in the U.S. Congress are usually re-elected. The same is true to a large extent on the state level. In many states not one incumbent seeking re-election to a house or senate is defeated.

Our government is a government by political parties guided by public opinion

and organized and manipulated by powerful interest groups. Special interests, grasping, self-serving, narrow private interests, are the moving force for much of government activity today. Alexis de Tocqueville, the eminent French observer of American democracy during the 1830s, foresaw this degeneration more than 150 years ago when he sounded the warning against special interest groups voting themselves every conceivable favor and largesse.

The halls of the U.S. Congress are crowded by some 20,000 registered lobbyists, the agents of 3,700 associations and 3,300 political action committees, nearly all of which are dedicated to enriching their particular sponsors at the expense of the American public. They are loitering about the marble halls of government seeking to buy access and broker deals for their clients. Clearly, they are not advancing the cause of individual enterprise and free markets. Even the agents of corporate America have no love of free enterprise; they represent corporate managers eager to enhance their own careers and feather their own nests at the expense of taxpayers and stockholders.

The members of Congress who are besieged by the legions of special interests seek to arrive at some symposium of priorities. Their vote generally depends

on the support it obtains. Majority rule is a principle of power which obeys the interests of the majority and elevates them over all other principles and precepts.

An outstanding common feature of our political structure is the outer-directed member of Congress who is oblivious to any single ideology. He may be the spokesman and representative of the most powerful special interest group in his Congressional district such as cotton growers, peanut farmers, tuna fishermen, or labor unions, or, he simply may represent the special interests of his district, making every effort to bring Federal funds to his district. He may author legislation and urge the president to restrict machine tool imports and grant tax favors to businesses which buy machinery and equipment made in his district, or, he may make "jobs, jobs, and more jobs" his priority by spending more of other people's money.

In the political climate of the special-interest society this politician is likely to be successful. He offers instant relief from all suffering, real and imagined, posturing as a saint and benefactor with ready solutions in his pocket for making all things right. Although he has difficulties managing his own personal affairs and balancing his own bank account, he wages war on poverty, war on disease, war on crime, war on drugs, etc., etc. Occupying the high ground of concern for his fellowmen, his fountainhead of strength is human frailty and failure; the banner under which he parades through his district is compassion.

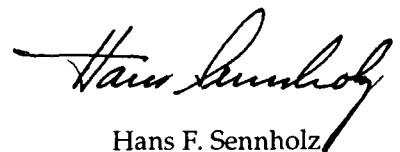
The "compassionate politician" who freely votes himself salary raises and expensive perks from the public treasury is likely to be rather evasive when asked about the source of the funds he is ever eager to spend. When pressed for an answer, he may flail at unnecessary waste and inefficiency as if his spending proposals could be financed out of some economy measures. In time, he is likely to

also labor diligently to forge and politicize his special interest groups in order to appropriate the necessary funds by majority vote and legislative force. He may denounce large corporations for not paying their "fair share" of taxes and castigate his affluent neighbors for evading their public obligations. He may launch special interest wars, fanning flames of discontent, envy, covetousness, hatred, and anger. At this point, he descends from the high point of human concern and stoops to a level of crass egotism. He becomes a Jekyll and Hyde, with alternating phases of concern and cruelty.

To confront these politicians is to challenge them on moral grounds. They are immune to economic reasoning which they reject and ridicule as the apologetics of stone-hearted Scrooges. But they are vulnerable to moral challenges. Their posturing as saints and benefactors can be exposed as a crude deceit. Their fountainhead of strength—compassion—can be unmasked as simple dressing and re-election farce. Their "generosity" obviously is nothing but bluster about their ability to gain access to the public treasury and engage in legal plunder.

There is little probability that the trend will change as long as we remain infatuated with the gods of politics. We must turn our backs on all demagogues, no matter what color or party. Above all, we must stand back from the privilege and entitlement troughs where the special interest groups like to congregate. We must openly tender our resignation from the pressure groups whose agents are laboring to keep the troughs replete and plentiful.

There is great power in example; we lead others when we walk upright.



Hans F. Sennholz

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between man and the work he must do to sustain and improve his life.

If and when such understanding develops on the part of the American people, it will be possible to accomplish the appropriate remedy. This would include the repeal of every law and regulation in any way tainted by the doctrine of intrinsic value, such as the Endangered Species Act. It would also include the repeal of all legislation requiring the banning of man-made chemicals merely because a statistical correlation with cancer in laboratory animals can be established when the chemicals are fed to the animals in massive, inherently destructive doses. The overriding purpose and nature of the remedy would be to break the constricting grip of environmentalism and make it possible for man to resume the increase in his productive powers in the United States in the remaining years of this century and in the new century ahead.

The Philosophical Environment

In addition to all of this vital work, there is a second and even more important level on which the new intellectuals must work. This, ironically enough, entails a form of cleaning up of the environment—the *philosophical, intellectual, and cultural environment*. What the cultural acceptance of a doctrine as irrational as environmentalism makes clear is that the real problem of the industrialized world is not “environmental pollution” but *philosophical corruption*. The so-called *intellectual mainstream* of the Western world has been fouled with a whole array of intellectual toxins resulting from the undermining of reason and the status of man, and which further contribute to this deadly process. Among them, besides environmentalism, are collectivism in its various forms of Marxism, racism, nationalism, and feminism; and cultural relativism, determinism, logical positivism, existentialism, linguistic analysis, behaviorism, Freudianism, Keynesianism, and more.

These doctrines are intellectual toxins because they constitute a systematic attack on one or more major aspects of the requirements of human life and well-being. Marxism results in the kind of disastrous conditions now prevailing in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. All the varieties of collectivism deny the freedom and rationality of the individual and attribute his ideas, character, and vital interests to his membership in a collec-

tive; namely, his membership in an economic class, racial group, nationality, or sex, as the case may be depending on the specific variety of collectivism. Because they view ideas as determined by group membership, these doctrines deny the very possibility of knowledge. Their effect is the creation of conflict between members of different groups: for example, between businessmen and wage earners, blacks and whites, English speakers and French speakers, men and women.

Determinism, the doctrine that man's actions are controlled by forces beyond his power of choice, and existentialism, the philosophy that man is trapped in a “human condition” of inescapable misery, lead people not to make choices they could have made and which would have improved their lives. Cultural relativism denies the objective value of modern civilization and thus undercuts both people's valuation of modern civilization and their willingness to work hard to achieve personal values in the context of it. The doctrine blinds people to the objective value of such marvelous advances as automobiles and electric light, and thus prepares the ground for the sacrifice of modern civilization to such nebulous and, by comparison, utterly trivial values as “unpolluted air.”

Logical positivism denies the possibility of knowing anything with certainty about the real world. Linguistic analysis regards the search for truth as a trivial word game. Behaviorism denies the existence of consciousness. Freudianism regards the conscious mind (the “Ego”) as surrounded by the warring forces of the unconscious mind in the form of the “Id” and the “Superego,” and thus as being incapable of exercising substantial influence on the individual's behavior. Keynesianism regards wars, earthquakes, and pyramid building as sources of prosperity. It looks to peacetime government budget deficits and inflation of the money supply as a good substitute for these allegedly beneficial phenomena. Its effects, as the present-day economy of the United States bears witness, are the erosion of the buying power of money, of saving and capital accumulation, and of credit.

These intellectual toxins can be seen bobbing up and down in the “intellectual mainstream,” just as raw sewage can be seen floating in a dirty river. Indeed, they fill the intellectual mainstream. Virtually every college and university in the Western

world is a philosophical cesspool of these doctrines, in which intellectually helpless students are immersed for several years and then turned loose to contaminate the rest of society. These irrationalist doctrines, and others like them, are the philosophical substance of contemporary liberal arts education.

Clearly, the most urgent task confronting the Western world, and the new intellectuals who must lead it, is a *philosophical and intellectual cleanup*. Without it, Western civilization simply cannot survive. It will be killed by the poison of environmentalism.

To accomplish this cleanup, only the most powerful, industrial-strength, philosophical and intellectual cleansing agents will do. These cleansing agents are, above all, the writings of Ayn Rand and Ludwig von Mises. These two towering intellects are, respectively, the leading advocates of reason and capitalism in the twentieth century. A philosophical-intellectual cleanup requires that all or most of their writings be introduced into colleges and universities as an essential part of the core curriculum, and that what is not included in the core curriculum be included in the more advanced programs. The incorporation of the writings of Ayn Rand and Ludwig von Mises into a prominent place in the educational curriculum is the central goal that everyone should work for who is con-

cerned about his cultural environment and the impact of that environment on his life and well-being. Only after this goal is accomplished will there be any possibility that colleges and universities will cease to be centers of civilization-destroying intellectual disease. Only after it is accomplished on a large scale, at the leading colleges and universities, can there be any possibility of the intellectual mainstream someday being clean enough for rational people to drink from its waters.

The Twenty-first Century should be the century when man begins the colonization of the solar system, not a return to the Dark Ages. Which it will be will depend on the extent to which new intellectuals can succeed in restoring to the cultural environment the values of reason and capitalism. □

These notes are furnished for the benefit of *Freeman* readers and do not appear in the pamphlet.

1. *Los Angeles Times Book Review*, October 22, 1989, p. 9.
2. Bill McKibben, *The End of Nature* (New York: Random House, 1989), p. 176.
3. *Forbes*, January 8, 1990, p. 303.
4. Edward C. Krug, "Fish Story," *Policy Review*, Number 59, Spring, 1990, pp. 44-48.
5. March 18, 1989 broadcast of ABC's 20/20. See also Bruce Ames, "What Are the Major Carcinogens in the Etiology of Human Cancer?" in *Important Advances in Oncology, 1989*, V. T. DeVita, Jr., S. Helman, and S. A. Rosenberg, eds. (New York: J. P. Lippincott, 1989), pp. 241-242.
6. *The New York Times*, September 20, 1990, p. A15.
7. *Orange County Register*, October 31, 1990, p. B15.
8. McKibben, *op. cit.*, p. 170.
9. *The Population Bomb* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1968), p. 61.

This essay originally appeared and is still available as a pamphlet published by The Jefferson School of Philosophy, Economics, and Psychology, P. O. Box 2934, Laguna Hills, CA 92654. Single copies \$4.25. Quantity rates (sent to one address and for distribution, not for resale): 2-49 copies \$2.75 each; 50 or more copies, \$1.00 each.

An earlier version of this essay was published under the title "Slaves of Nature" in the *Orange County Register* on October 28 and November 4, 1990. The essay also appears as the concluding essay in *Rational Reading on Environmental Concerns*, edited by Jay Lehr (Van Nostrand-Reinhold, 1992).

The Gregs of Styal

by Robert Thomas

The modern village and estate of Styal are situated in countryside nine miles south of the city of Manchester in northern England. At the center of the village is the factory mill which, powered by the waters of the river Bollin, still spins and weaves cotton as it has done for over two hundred years. The present-day textile production at Styal is part of an acclaimed working industrial museum visited by many thousands of people each year. The museum seeks to reproduce accurately the methods and working conditions of the Industrial Revolution, and has received both the British Museum of the Year Award and the European "Europa Nostra" diploma for restoration and interpretation.

In the 19th century, the Styal mill was at the center of a great industrial and commercial empire involved in the production and selling of cotton goods. The Greg family who owned Styal were not only highly successful businessmen, they were also ardent advocates of free trade. These individualist beliefs were expressed in the business philosophy which they applied to the running of mills such as Styal, and in their political activities where they were involved in the campaign against the restrictive Corn Laws.

The advent of the Industrial Revolution in Britain saw the rapid expansion in the size and industrial import of Manchester and the surrounding area. Between 1773 and 1801 the population of Manchester more than trebled with a contemporary witness recording the building of "hundreds of five and six storied factories, each with a towering chimney at its side which exhales black coal vapour."

During the period from 1760 to 1829 the value of English cotton exports, on which the region's wealth was based, rose from an average of

£200,000 to over £37 million a year. The region's combination of industrial self-sufficiency within Britain and important international contacts gave rise to a distinct set of social and political attitudes and values amongst the new industrialists of the area who believed in an ethos of individualism, self-help, and free trade. The Gregs, who in the late 18th and early 19th centuries rose to be among the greatest of the northern "cotton kings," were typical of this.

When Samuel Greg founded his mill at Styal outside Manchester in 1784 he was already a man of some wealth from an established non-conformist merchant family. Circumstances at the time were favorable for a movement into cotton manufacturing. The American War of Independence had recently ended, opening up new markets for cotton goods. In 1783 the patent on Arkwright's new spinning machine known as "the spinning Jenny" had expired, relieving manufacturers such as Greg of the burden of license fees. The Styal site situated on the river Bollin offered a highly suitable source of water power. A combination of business dynamism and family contacts allowed Samuel Greg to expand his firm, establishing new factory mills in the area at Bury, Bollington, Caton, and Lancaster that employed more than 2,000 people. Despite an uncertain period during the Napoleonic wars, when substantial losses were suffered on goods being traded in Spain, the Greg factories continued to be highly profitable. Overall returns in the Greg factories between 1819 and 1831 averaged 13.2 percent comparing favorably with other factory mills in the area.

Samuel Greg died in 1834 and the family firm passed into the joint management of his sons. The firm was dissolved in 1841 and the mills divided among the Greg brothers. Two of the brothers, Samuel and William, soon dropped out of the cotton industry, leaving the mills at Lancaster, Caton,

Robert Thomas works in the research department of the British Conservative Party.

and Bollington to be run by John Greg. The original mill at Styal was run by Robert Hyde Greg along with new mills he had acquired at Calver and Reddish. These mills remained profitable under Robert Hyde Greg's management until his death in 1875. The latter 19th and 20th century saw a decline in the area's cotton industry. Styal mill, however, remained in production until 1939 when the mill and estate were purchased by the National Trust. Styal mill opened to the public as a museum in 1978. The descendants of Samuel Greg still live in Styal village.

A Harmony of Interests

Fundamental to the Gregs' outlook was a belief that there was a harmony of interests between the employer and the employee. The Gregs invested in providing good working and living conditions for their parish apprentices and factory operatives in the belief that such a policy would be rewarded by hard work and good labor relations.

The apprentices were poor children from workhouses bound by their local parish authorities (who were responsible for them) into trades for a period of seven years. This system had its origin in 16th-century poor-law legislation and was intended to teach the children skills that would support them in later life. The system was condemned by contemporary social critics as the involuntary nature of the apprentice labor often led to poor conditions of employment and documented abuses by some mill owners. Poor working conditions were, however, alien to the policy and philosophy of the Gregs, who believed that a badly treated and unhealthy workforce would inevitably be an inefficient workforce. The good conditions maintained by the Gregs for their apprentices would seem to account for the many recorded instances of apprentices staying on at Styal after their seven years were up. One former apprentice said that at Styal "the rooms were very clean, the floors frequently washed, the rooms aired every day and white washed once a year." A medical officer was maintained to treat any apprentices who fell ill, and care was taken to provide a varied diet. As a result, there were comparatively few deaths at Styal mill, and hardly any were the result of mill work. Education was also provided for the apprentices—possibly due to the liberal influence of Samuel's wife, Hannah Greg—with the children

being given a basic education supplemented by music lessons and religious instruction.

In the 1820s, when the Factory Acts discouraged the employment of juvenile labor and parish children were less readily available, the Gregs sought to create a stable community at Styal. In order to attract adults the Gregs provided housing for their workers. Between 1819 and 1831 over £6000 was spent on cottage development, and by 1873 there were 108 cottages at Styal, housing some 538 workers. The Gregs also attempted to create a cultural life for their employees by providing a school, a chapel, and a shop, and encouraging the establishment of a Female Society and a debating society. A branch of the Mechanics Institute was set up at the mill. The Gregs' investment in their workforce seems to have paid off, as until the last quarter of the 19th century Styal mill enjoyed a very low level of labor turnover. Labor relations also appear to have been good: the mill was stopped by industrial action only once during the whole of the 19th century.

This evidence of good relations between factory owner and workers contrasts markedly with the grim picture of exploitation and class hatred offered by such writers as Friedrich Engels who observed the Manchester area in this period. All the measures taken by the Gregs to benefit their workers were, however, meant to enhance the productivity and profitability of the mill rather than as part of any scheme of social improvement. It was in the ultimate interest of owner and employee alike to see that the mill continued to be profitable. This was, however, forgotten by Samuel Greg, Jr., when he took over the running of Bollington Mill in 1832. Samuel, Jr., saw the mill not as a chance to make money but as an opportunity to carry out a social experiment—similar to that effected by the socialist pioneer Robert Owen in his factories at New Lanark—in order to "elevate the conditions of the labouring classes." In pursuit of this aim Samuel, Jr., gave lessons in natural history, held tea parties for his workers and established an "Order of the Silver Cross" to be awarded to girls of 17 and 18 who showed a "superiority of character and manner." While these high-minded ideals consumed Samuel's interests, the Bollington mill's finances were neglected. Falling profitability and increasing debt led to a breakdown in labor relations in 1846. As a result the running of Bollington mill was taken over by John Greg, who applied

rational business aims once more to the management of the mill.

British politics before the industrial revolution had been the almost exclusive domain of the landed aristocracy. Increasingly, however, in the 19th century the newly powerful factory owners and industrialists became involved in politics. One of the Gregs' fellow cotton mill owners, Robert Peel from nearby Bolton, was to become Prime Minister. Peel's Tamworth manifesto published in 1834 is credited with being one of the founding documents of the modern British Conservative party. The Gregs enthusiastically campaigned for the 1832 Reform Act which removed the anomaly of under-representation in Parliament of the new urban centers of wealth and population. At a reform meeting in Manchester, Robert Hyde Greg argued that "the elective franchise should be so efficient that members of the House of Commons should be really—not nominally—the representatives of the people."

The Gregs were, however, deeply suspicious of further extension of the franchise. They feared it would lead to the dominance of the collective over the individual in government, endangering the institution of property. Robert Hyde Greg confided his worries to his journal, writing that "poverty causes dependence and is easily bought. No property diminishes respect for property, consequently the security of property becomes compromised. Multitudes are easily carried away by passion and by rumours, however absurd." William Greg openly expressed his fear that the removal of the property qualification for voting would undermine the incentive to acquire property. Greg's friend, William Lecky, expanded on this theme of the danger to the individual from the uncontrolled will of the majority in his book *Democracy and Liberty*.

The political issue that most concerned the Gregs was, however, the promotion of free trade and opposition to the Corn Laws. The Corn Laws had been introduced in 1815 to protect agriculture artificially by inhibiting foreign competition. By closing British markets to foreign agricultural produce the laws also restricted the export markets for British manufactured goods and even encouraged foreign competition. Robert Hyde Greg was a prominent member of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce when it began to argue in favor of free trade in the 1820s. In 1825 he drew up a memorial outlining the benefits of free trade and

began calling for the repeal of the Corn Laws. "Agriculture," Greg declared angrily, "has relied on protection instead of relying as it ought to have done on intelligence, frugality and industry." He emphasized the damaging effects of protection and trade prohibition on industry saying that, "The great point we have to impress upon the minds of our rulers is that trade is merely barter, that it is an exchange of one commodity for another, that we can no more trade with those countries the products of which we refuse to receive than we can trade with those countries which absolutely prohibit the products of this country."

Robert Hyde Greg's active opposition to the Corn Laws brought him into contact with Richard Cobden. Greg claimed, however, that his interest in the issue pre-dated that of Cobden, writing in 1843: "The fact is that no one in Lancashire some years ago thought anything about the Corn Laws except J. B. Smith and myself. Cobden was then unknown; but the second time I saw him was when he came to me, in the company of J. B. Smith, for the purpose of forming an Anti-Corn Law Association." In 1838 the Association was transformed into the nationally organized Anti-Corn Law League. Greg took a prominent role in the League, addressing numerous meetings and raising money. At one meeting in Manchester chaired by Robert Hyde Greg, £60,000 was raised in a few hours. Between 1839 and 1841 Greg served as the Anti-Corn Law League Member of Parliament for Manchester. To a lesser extent, William Greg was also active in the League, opposing the Corn Laws on humanitarian grounds, drawing attention to the effect on the working classes of the artificially high bread prices. The Corn Laws, William Greg declared in 1842, conspired "To keep up the first necessary of life at a famine price." In 1846 the League triumphed and the Corn Laws were abolished, effectively ushering in the era of Victorian free trade.

The significance of the Gregs as a family lies in the fact that they combined the economic and political theory of such philosophers as Adam Smith, Richard Cobden, and Frederic Bastiat with the technical innovations of their time to produce great works of industrial enterprise. It was through men such as the Gregs that the ideas of free trade were applied in practice, and their full consequences for the spreading of prosperity and liberty fell in Britain and across the world. The museum at Styal stands as a memorial to their work. □

Prelude to the Total State

by Nelson Hultberg

The enslavement of man usually begins in the economic sphere.

—EDWARD GIBBON

Capitalism died in 1929, according to the esteemed pundits of our day. Since that fateful year, the prominent intellectuals and politicians of our country have been promoting the welfare state as a “safe, responsible, middle ground between the opposite poles of capitalism and socialism”—the perfect system to preserve freedom, maintain economic stability, and bring about the good life.

Today's chaotic and corrupted America does little to corroborate that notion. What the last 60 years have shown is that the welfare state is not a stable middle ground at all, but a highly unstable mixture of individual freedom and government coercion that is evolving steadily away from freedom toward an all-pervasive statism.

It becomes more obvious each year that what Ludwig von Mises repeatedly declared throughout his extensive writings is true, that there can never be a third way between capitalism and socialism—that is, a third way that does not degenerate into socialism or progress to capitalism. The Herculean task confronting us today is to convince the public, in clear-cut terminology, why this is so. What cogent arguments can we articulate to warn America about the dangers of adopting the policies of welfare statism, and expose as

well its tendency to evolve into some form of tyranny?

The purpose of this essay is to examine three of the primary reasons why unchecked welfarism is only a “prelude to the total state.” These arguments have been expounded in the past by numerous insightful advocates of freedom, but they must be repeated and rearticulated by different minds and voices for new generations of Americans.

Interventions Bring More Interventions

The first reason why the welfare state cannot sustain freedom is the famous Misesian thesis: *Government interventions always breed economic dislocations that “necessitate” more government interventions.*

For example, no government can pay for the extravagances of welfarism solely with taxes, for the productive members of society will tolerate only so much taxation. The politicians in power inevitably turn to the expedient of monetary inflation, and through manipulation of the Federal Reserve System pay for their extravagance.

Here is where the chain reaction of government interventions and dislocations really begins to play havoc, for one cannot inflate the money supply through the Federal Reserve without eventually causing higher prices. If government then tries to prevent prices from rising through price controls, it eliminates profits, slows produc-

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tion, and causes shortages. The lower supply of goods, combined with monetary expansion, tends to raise prices still further. What was intended to stop rising prices, price controls, causes prices to rise. If price controls remain in effect, the results will be more severe shortages, malinvestment, black markets, and corruption. If government then attempts to control all the means of production and distribution in an effort to eliminate the chaos and corruption its actions have caused, it must also control consumer choices and personal ambitions, for they determine what goods are to be produced. Government cannot control consumer choices and personal ambitions without attempting to control the human mind through education, the press, movies, and books. The logical consequence of government intervention is totalitarianism.

The Keynesian Revolution

The rationale for government intervention stems from many sources, one of the most important being the Keynesian revolution of the 1930s and its emphasis on “macro” rather than “micro” economic theory. This revolution shifted concern from the actions of individuals to the interplay of aggregates or collectives.

In practice this meant the subordination of the rights of the individual to allegedly higher “goods,” e.g., the good of the economy, the expansion of the GNP, and the building of a Great Society.

Because their emphasis is on groups and aggregates, welfare state (or macro) economists think in terms of expanding the *economy's* supply of money, dispensing the *public's* revenues, revamping the *nation's* priorities, and using the *nation's* resources. Groups, cities, minorities, society—rather than individuals—are the important entities. Because of the profound influence that Keynes had, macro-economists now seek to coordinate the nation's aggregates by manipulating its money supply, taxation, wage levels, business profits, and savings from Washington.

Here lies the major flaw of the interventionist program: To think in terms of manipulating profits, consumption, savings, and investments of a society presupposes thinking in terms of *manipulating human beings*. You can't control money, wages, price levels, and ratios of private

consumption to public expenditures without also controlling people themselves. These phenomena are all merely *effects*; people and their thoughts, ambitions, and actions are the *causes*.

Since it does no good to attempt to alter or plan effects without also controlling causes, our planners in Washington, who wish to control and regulate our nation's economic productivity in an efficient manner, must ultimately try to control and regulate the causes of that productivity—which are the thoughts, ambitions and actions of the men and women who create it. This will require some form of authoritarian political system.

Welfare state theoreticians are now concerned mostly with relatively haphazard controls over human actions (through economic regulations), and over human thoughts and ambitions (through educational controls). But the laws of human action will mandate further evolution of control.

A Model for the West?

Despite the fact that individual freedom shrivels to minimal levels under Swedish-style welfarism, America's “liberal” academic leaders subtly applaud such a system, considering it to be a model for the West. As *The Los Angeles Times* recently reported in reference to the “Swedish Model”: “Concerned Swedish economists are questioning whether the welfare benefits are still worth what they say is the cost: the overwhelming taxes, economic slowdown, high inflation, falling productivity, lowering worker morale, and rising unemployment that seem now to characterize this nation of 8.6 million people.”¹

Several writers in the past two decades have exposed the nightmarish cost of Sweden's state welfarism, Roland Huntford's *The New Totalitarians* being the most celebrated. Under the benevolent guardianship of an all-powerful, centralized state, the Swedes relinquished their independence for the numbing existence of the hive, where soul-crushing bureaucracies stretch their tentacles into every nook and cranny of life. Taxes exceed 90 percent of income, children become wards of the state, names become numbers, obsequiousness is admired, alcoholism and drug addiction are rampant, and anxiety is everyone's constant companion.

Naturally, statist intellectuals here in America

solicitously denounce such a development, maintaining that they want only to intervene a little bit, and just “redirect resources,” “smooth out disparities,” “create a perpetual prosperity.” They don’t intend to regiment all of life. They don’t intend to build a monster bureaucracy. But, eventually they must, if they intend to control things from Washington.

In his monumental study of 20th-century bureaucratism, *The Myth of the Welfare State*, Jack D. Douglas analyzes this self-reinforcing nature of statist growth, and why interventionist governments tend to evolve into more and more dictatorial governments: “The megastate ratchets up slowly, always in the guise of ‘serving the common welfare’ and generally in the pretense of meeting a crisis. Once the bureaucratic regimentation of everyday life has become pervasive, it begins to trigger” acute socio-economic crises (inflation, recessions, shortages, monopolies, corruption, etc.), which create “alienation and outrage” throughout the country. “These crises triggered by the higher levels of statist bureaucratization then become the enabling crises of further ratchets-up in statist powers—it becomes a vital necessity for ‘the common welfare’ to ‘solve’ the problems being caused by the drift into statist collectivization by increasing the bureaucratic regulations, which in turn produce new crises that must be solved by further ratchets-up.

“The drift into statist regimentation of life is, thus, an *autocatalytic process*—it reinforces itself, or feeds upon itself. The drift upward into greater regimentation accelerates because the new statist attempts at solutions to problems destroy the old ways of dealing with them, and build ratchets under the dependencies on the new statist ‘solutions’ as people restructure their life commitments in expectation of continuing those statist dependencies. At the extreme, statist bureaucracies first breed a generalized dependency in individual personalities and then in whole subcultures, whose members transmit this dependency to new generations.”²

Thus all welfare states, utilizing a mixture of economic freedom and government intervention, tend to establish pervasive controls over most of the political, economic, and educational activities of their people. It might take many, many decades for a nation to work itself into the position whereby its regimentation is widespread and insuffer-

able, but that day will come when there is such socio-economic chaos and stultification resulting from all the “ratchets-up” and “crisis solutions,” that the government will finally give up on even the pretense of freedom, and suspend the basic rights of the people.

Special Privileges to Factions

The second reason why the welfare state cannot sustain freedom is that *government welfarism destroys a limited and objective framework of law by extending special privileges to certain segments of society at the expense of other segments.*

For example, it conveys welfare services to the less productive at the expense of the more productive, protective legislation to various corporations at the expense of consumers and other businesses, job preferences to some at the expense of better qualified applicants, and labor laws passed to favor unions at the expense of employers and workers. To put it more bluntly, the welfare state destroys the philosophy of “equal rights for all” in favor of “special privileges for factions.” It is a doctrine of *legalized favoritism*, that must by its very nature lead to dissension, corruption, and tyranny.

Our intellectual leaders should consider the following: What possible hope for peace and good will can there be when some men and women (by joining forces with a large enough group) are allowed to use government coercion and intervention to gain their desires? What possible kind of life can people live when the degree of their freedom is determined, not *equally* by the law of the Constitution, but *unequally* by the variable whims of bureaucrats and voters? What kind of social climate develops when people are penalized for their ability and self-reliance, and rewarded for throwing tantrums en masse? What kind of individual freedom and economic stability can we have when men and women are subjected to such injustice? What type of country will evolve from such nonsensical and arbitrary rule?

The last three decades of political-economic turmoil in America have shown us what type of country we can expect—a chaotic assemblage of special interest groups (such as labor unions, ethnic minorities, welfare recipients, and activists working to promulgate the “rights” of women, homosexuals, and others) all demanding special privileges, controls, and handouts from the feder-

al government. None of them is willing to contemplate the destruction of individual freedom they are perpetrating in the process. In fact, many feel they are enhancing freedom.

It is here in the nature of welfarism and its evolution that we get a glimpse of one of the most important issues of political philosophy: Governments can be organized under one of two types of law: limited and objective, or open-ended and arbitrary. Which type we choose determines our way of life. The first leads to individualism and freedom; the second to collectivism and tyranny.

Limited and objective law means that the statutes enacted by the governing power are predetermined to do only certain things for the people, and they are equally applicable to all citizens. In other words, there are no special privileges conveyed to some citizens, e.g., entitlements, subsidies, controls, tariffs, and monopolies. The laws passed do not favor any individual or group over another. They do not help or hinder one in relation to another. Whatever they do, they do for everyone.

Open-ended and arbitrary law means that the statutes enacted by the governing power are haphazard and unequally applicable to the citizens of a country. They are up-for-grabs, so to speak, concerned with dispensing preferential treatment to powerful interest groups. They are not predetermined, but flexible, and their meaning and application are based upon the whim of the rulers (whether the rulers are one man, a council of men, or a plurality of the voters). There are either no limits, or poorly defined limits, placed upon the application of such laws.

Throughout history all governments have been organized, to some degree or another, upon an *open-ended and arbitrary* basis. There has never been a country with a truly *limited and objective* system of law. America came close in 1787, but even she allowed "special privileges" to be enacted into law. Naturally there are gradations of arbitrariness. Some systems are more arbitrary than others in their exercise of governmental power, and thus more despotic than others.

The welfare state vision is based totally upon open-ended and arbitrary law (i.e., the conveyance of special privileges according to the whims of the rulers and the pressures of factions, with poorly defined limitations). The fact that it is democratic does not change the arbitrary nature and poorly

defined limits of its statutes, nor does such a fact convey legitimacy to the arbitrariness and openness of its power, nor does it justify the vast array of privileges that its factions and majorities vote for themselves. Tyranny is still tyranny, whether it is one man, ten men, or millions of men usurping the rights of the individual. Welfarism, despite its democratic implementation, is just another form of despotism, and will, unchecked, evolve into a more despotic form.

A Moral-Philosophical Shift

The third reason why the welfare state cannot sustain freedom is rooted in the *moral-philosophical shift this country has made since the turn of the century*.

Prior to 1913, America was predominantly a laissez-faire society, and definitely a much freer society. I say *predominantly* here, for America of course has never been a completely laissez-faire society. Even from the start in 1787, the government arbitrarily exercised its power to dispense special privileges to various sectors of society (it passed protective tariffs, subsidized canals and railways, sanctioned various public-works bills, and until 1865 allowed the limited practice of slavery). But such interventionist favoritism was minimal throughout the 19th century, with the determination of most human action left up to the people themselves, according to their own desires.

Thus what is important is that the great bulk of what was achieved by individuals during this period had to be done with their own peaceful effort and *voluntary* trade among themselves. The law of the land was simple and just. No man could force another man to give him the basic economic necessities of life, either directly through robbery or indirectly through the government's power to tax. This was the beauty and strength of America—the key to her freedom. Young people were raised to expect protection, never provision, from their government. And thus they grew up as individuals in search of *achievement*, not as protesters in search of *guaranteed incomes*.

The ratification of the 16th Amendment and the enactment of the Federal Reserve Act in 1913 changed all this. They established the Federal income tax and a central bank, which led to a surge of government intervention into the

economy, which led to the Great Depression and the New Deal. The New Dealers opened wide the floodgates of government coercion in men's lives, by establishing the right of the government to take the wealth of some and give it to others. In this way, they altered the entire conception of what government's role in life should be. America was formed and built upon the idea of government being an *objective preserver of the peace*. The New Dealers made government an *arbitrary manipulator of the people*.

President Franklin Roosevelt and the statists of the 1930s rose to power by establishing what they termed an "Economic Bill of Rights," which stated that all men have certain economic needs (housing, food, medicine, income, security); and if they won't provide themselves with those needs, it is the duty of the government to step in and do it for them through higher taxation and the political redistribution of property.

This in essence established morally and philosophically that whatever a person "needs" he has a "right" to. As a result, a whole new generation of Americans has come to believe that their government is not just their *protector* but also their *provider*. Thus they think nothing of now demanding more government favors and handouts every year as a "right."

And why shouldn't they? The prevailing morality of our society has told them that all men deserve not just the right to *produce*, but now the right to *confiscate* the economic "necessities" of life, the right to define those "needs" by majority vote, and the right to use the power of the state in the confiscation process.

From Self-Reliance to Dependency

The endless protest movements, wars on poverty, ever higher taxes, inflation, regulation, and special interest legislation that have come to be such prominent factors in our lives in America today are the long-range results of the moral-philosophical shift we made at the turn of the century—from a country built upon self-reliance and individual freedom, to a people dependent upon government handouts and state control.

Government growth requires a moral rationale. If we were never to furnish such a rationale, we would be immune to state dictatorships. We have

provided that rationale, though, by teaching the younger generation that their "needs" are "rights," and that the redistribution of private wealth is a legitimate policy.

Once such a redistributionist philosophy is accepted, all factions' demands for more welfare, better housing, guaranteed incomes, special subsidies, loans, and favors provoke more demands and an ever growing deluge of taxes, bureaucracy, deficit spending, and inflation.

Collectivists will approve of it by vote. "It's the least disastrous of our alternatives," they will cry, not bothering to contemplate that it was their government controls in the first place that brought on the very chaos that they will then use to justify all-pervasive government control. But collectivist mentalities are not concerned with getting at the actual causes of our problems. They are concerned only with increasing the power of the government to feed their delusions.

These then are three of the more important reasons why the welfare state philosophy will ultimately lead to tyranny: (1) government interventions lead to more and more intervention; (2) dispensing special privileges leads to arbitrary law; and (3) freedom's moral base is subverted with redistributionist tax policies.

The alternative to this insidious drift of our welfare state system is the one course our intellectual and political leaders refuse to face—restoration of a true capitalist economy, where no special privileges are dispensed by government to anybody, where men and women are taxed equally, where government is strictly controlled by the Constitution, and where productive peaceful people are left alone to build their lives to whatever level they are capable, while helping those who can't through the many voluntary charitable organizations that spring from the American people's abundant compassion and goodwill. Such a system worked splendidly for 125 years here in America, and only began to fizzle as the government began to intervene.

This is not a plea to return to the simplicity of the horse and buggy age. This is an exhortation to restore the principles of a free market and a strictly limited constitutional government, for these are the only proper principles, and the only system of social organization that will provide enduring freedom, prosperity, and dignity.

The lessons of history are clear. If a country will

not respect the concept of private property, allow freedom in the marketplace, and refrain from dispensing favors and subsidies to special interest groups, then it is on its way to economic deterioration, mob rule, and an arrogant, overweening form of government.

The countries of most of the rest of the world have already dropped over the philosophical precipice to collectivism, and are gradually evolving into various forms of "benevolent authoritari-

anism." America remains as a bastion of individual freedom, but even she is under severe attack, and faltering. America still has a chance because she still has a choice. But her people must identify the nature of the ideological struggle and make the right choice. ☐

1. "The Swedish Model Doesn't Seem Quite So Lovely These Days," *The Los Angeles Times*, June 18, 1991.

2. Jack D. Douglas, *The Myth of The Welfare State* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 1989), p. 24.

Freeman Editor Awarded Prize

The Foundation for Economic Education is delighted and proud to announce that Edmund A. Opitz, a member of the Foundation's Senior Staff since 1955 and a contributing editor of *The Freeman*, has been awarded a \$5,000 prize in the Amy Foundation Writing Awards for 1991.

Mr. Opitz's award-winning essay, "Biblical Roots of American Liberty," appeared in *The Freeman* in July 1991. Its thesis is that "Nations of the West were founded on biblical principles of



justice, freedom, and a work ethic." Mr. Opitz is an ordained Congregational minister, the founder and coordinator of The Remnant, a fellowship of conservative and libertarian ministers, and a founder and secretary of The Nockian Society.

He has published more than one hundred fifty articles and reviews in a score of publications. He has written two books, *The Powers That Be* and *Religion and Capitalism: Allies, Not Enemies* and co-authored a third, *The Kingdom Without God*. Mr. Opitz has lectured widely and participated in more than two hundred FEE seminars.

Men Versus Machines

by J. Gresham Machen

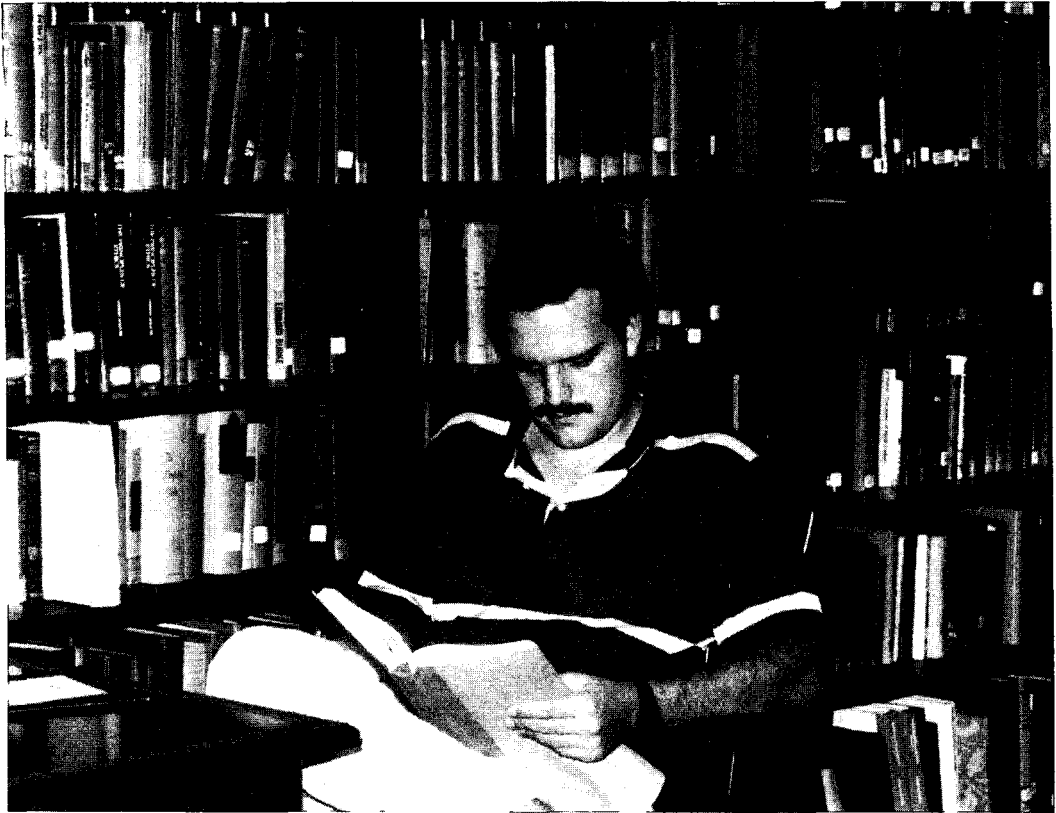
What is the purpose of education? One view which has been widely held is that the purpose of education is to enable a man or a woman to earn more money after graduation from school or college. That is the so-called vocational view of education. Advocates of it can adduce statistics, I believe, to show that graduates of high schools or colleges get better positions than those who are not graduates. With regard to this vocational view it can be said for one thing that it is enormously over-done. It is training up so many people in the hope of their earning large salaries that there are not enough large salaries to go around. That was true even before the depression came upon us. Moreover, this view is hopelessly narrow and inflexible. It seeks to make men efficient machines, but unfortunately a machine can do only one thing, and when that thing no longer needs to be done the machine has to be scrapped. But the deeper objection to the exclusively vocational view of education is that a man never was meant to be a machine at all. If you make a machine of him, you are doing the direct opposite of what true education ought to do.

A better view of education is that education ought to broaden a man, ought to keep him from getting into the narrow rut of any one aptitude or activity. I remember that Dr. R. J. G. McKnight, President of the Reformed Presbyterian Seminary in Pittsburgh, in an address which he delivered recently at Westminster Seminary, said that

he had made a visit a short time before to an automobile factory. He had admired very much, he said, the wonderful skill developed by operatives in the factory. Particularly had he observed the speed and accuracy with which a man in the assembling plant put on the rear fenders of the cars as they came down the endless line. That man, he said, might not be able to do a lot of other things; but one thing certainly could be said for him—he was certainly the world's best Ford-car-left-rear-fender-putter-on. Well, I think perhaps there is some hope even for that putter-on of left rear fenders. With shorter hours and consequently increased leisure given to operatives in factories, it is quite possible that that Ford-car-left-rear-fender-putter-on may learn to love his Tennyson and his Horace in his leisure time.

But whatever may be said of him, it is a poor view of education to hold that it condemns men to remain mere Ford-car-left-rear-fender-putters-on all their lives. I think the man who above all others should be pitied is the man who has never learned how to amuse himself without mechanical assistance when he is alone. Even babies are sometimes taught to amuse themselves. I remember when I was at Princeton I used to watch the baby of one of the professors on the Seminary campus. That self-reliant little mite of humanity would spend the entire morning in the middle of that great green expanse, all by himself, and yet in the most complete contentment and in the most perfect safety. He was early learning the great lesson how to use his leisure time. He did not need to have anybody else rattle his rattle for him. Thank you, if he needed a rattle at all he could rattle his own rattle for himself. He was get-

J. Gresham Machen (1881-1937) was Professor of New Testament at Princeton Seminary and author of many books including Education, Christianity and the State, from which this article is adapted.



BETTINA BIEN GREAVES

ting a good preparation for life. A person who can rattle his own rattle when he is a baby is very apt to be able to paddle his own canoe when he becomes a man.

The average American, however, remains a baby all his life. He is unable even to rattle his own rattle. He has to have somebody else amuse him all the time. Leave him alone for five minutes, and he has to turn on his radio. It seems to make very little difference to him what the radio gives forth. All he wants is that some kind of physical impact shall be made on his eardrums—and incidentally on everybody else's eardrums—just to keep him from having one moment to himself. Turn off his radio even for a moment and the appalling emptiness of his life is at once revealed.

What is the explanation of this emptiness of American life? The explanation is that the average American is not educated. An uneducated man shrinks from quiet. An educated man longs for it. Leave an educated man alone, and he has, for one thing, the never-failing resource of reading. He has that resource in his home; he may even carry it around in his pocket. Mr. Loeb has

done more for the cause of true education with his pocket editions of the classics than have the founders of many universities.* Even more truly educated is the man who does not need even the prop of pocket editions, but can draw at any moment, in meditation, upon the resources of a well-stocked mind.

But what shall be done for the great hosts of Americans who have never learned how to read with enjoyment, and to whom meditation has become a lost art? What shall be done about the increasing problem of leisure time?

Intrusions of Government

Well, I can tell you one thing that ought not to be done about it. Whatever may be done about it, government certainly ought not to do anything about it. People talk about this great national problem of leisure time. Since it is a national problem, they say, Congress ought to take it up; or rather, Congress ought to perform its up-to-date function of being a rubber stamp by turning

*James Loeb (1867-1933), American banker and philanthropist, who founded and endowed the Loeb Classical Library.

the problem over to some government bureau. So we shall have government directing even our holiday activities for us; government will be telling us not only how we shall work, and how much we shall work, and how much we shall get for our work, but also how we shall play.

I remember the first school I attended. It was a private school, which, I suppose, might be called a kindergarten. There were various tasks to be performed in the various periods of the school's session. But to me the most irksome period was one in which we were all required to stand up under the eye of the teacher and play games with a lot of little girls. I thought it was the toughest duty of the entire school day. Some time later, years later I think, I discovered that it was supposed to be the recess hour! What I had held to be work was regarded by the teachers as play. I am inclined to think still that I rather than the teachers was right. Play that is prescribed and supervised by the powers that be is often the most irksome kind of work.

That is true of the grandiose recreation schemes into which the Federal government is now entering. A great system of National Parks has been built up. It might have been a beneficent thing if it meant that the natural beauty of the regions now embraced in the National Parks were to be preserved. But as a matter of fact it means nothing of the kind. During a period of over 30 years I used to go in the summers, with some interruptions, to Mt. Desert Island, Maine. When I first went there it was about the sweetest and most beautiful lake and mountain region that could possibly be imagined. It really seemed as though no human being would have the heart to destroy the delicate charm of those woods. But

then came Mr. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., and the Lafayette (later Acadia), National Park, and all was changed. Huge roads now scar practically every mountainside and skirt the shores of practically every lake. The woods near the roads have been ruthlessly "cleaned up." The natural beauty of the region has been systematically destroyed. When I go into that National Park, with its dreary regularity and its officialdom, I almost feel as though I were in some kind of penal institution. I feel somewhat as I do when I am in Los Angeles or any of the other over-regulated cities of the West, where pedestrians meekly wait around on the street corners for non-existent traffic and cross the streets only at the sound of the prison gong. Certain it is at any rate that the best way to destroy true recreation is for government to go into the business of promoting it.

The far more serious thing, however, is that this odious governmental activity in the destruction of the natural beauty of the woods is only a symbol of what is going on today in the sphere of human life. As the government bureaus are out to destroy every sweet and free and delicate thing in the woods and streams, so they are also out to destroy every sweet and free and delicate thing in the lives of the citizens. The ideal plainly is that we shall be under government tutelage from the cradle to the grave. In the cradle a maternity bureau will have us in its clutches; in the period of our school life we shall be in government schools, which will direct our recreation as well as our studies; after we get through school we shall be subjected to adult education under government control and shall be questioned as to our use of our leisure time. From this dreary goose-step there will be no escape. □

"A Thinking Reed"

Man is but a reed, the most feeble thing in nature; but he is a thinking reed. It is not necessary that the universe arm itself to crush him. A vapor, a drop of water suffices to kill him. But if the universe were to crush him, man would still be more noble than that which killed him, because he knows that he dies and the advantage that the universe has over him; the universe knows nothing of this. Thus all our dignity consists in thought.

—BLAISE PASCAL

**IDEAS
ON
LIBERTY**



Smoking on Airplanes

by Robert T. Smith

Some time ago, the Federal Aviation Administration, in its infinite wisdom, banned smoking on domestic airline flights. One of the reasons given was that passive smoke is harmful, and that non-smoking persons in the close confines of an airplane cabin would suffer deleterious effects from this passive smoke. One editorial in favor of the Federal regulation to ban smoking went so far as to compare an airliner cabin to a "smoke-filled bar room."

Smoking is bad for you. Not only does the nicotine cause heart problems, but smoke in the lungs causes lesions which can result in cancer, and each cigarette depletes your body of about 25 mg of vitamin C, which, according to Dr. Linus Pauling, has been demonstrated to play a part in the prevention of cancer. So, even those of us who smoke will agree that it is dangerous, and a bad, smelly habit. And expensive. But that is not the issue here.

The issue is, should the government ban smoking on airplanes? Or in hotels? Restaurants? Any privately owned building, even your home, as some have suggested? Specifically, does the danger warrant a Federal regulation to prohibit smoking on airplanes and thus subject an innocent citizen who unwittingly lights up to criminal prosecution?

Most American homes have a closed-circuit heating and air-conditioning system. Except for leaks around doors and windows, no outside air gets into the house. If there is a smoker in the house the passive smoke stays in the house, or at least a large percentage of it does. The same situa-

tion exists in many office buildings. So the air in homes and office buildings where most of us live and work is not changed on a regular basis. But the air in an airplane cabin is. The engines suck in air and a portion of this air is bled off the compressor section of the engine and sent to the cabin heating and air-conditioning system. This clean, fresh air from the outside is not contaminated by anything. It is pumped into the cabin to pressurize the cabin, and in the process it is heated or cooled to provide a comfortable temperature in the cabin even though the outside air may be as low as seventy degrees below zero or as hot as a hundred and ten. The engines pump this air into the airplane's pressurization/heating/air-conditioning system on a continuous basis. Even though the airliner may be flying at an altitude of 35,000 feet or higher, the engines have the capacity to pump enough air into the cabin so that the atmosphere in the cabin is generally somewhere between 5,000 and 8,000 feet, but never above 10,000 feet.

How long does it take for all of the stale air in the cabin to escape and be replaced by clean, fresh air? To answer that question, I went to the source, Boeing Airplane Company in Seattle, Washington. Prior to World War II, Boeing built the first pressurized airliner, the Boeing 307 "Stratoliner"; later the first pressurized bomber, the B-29; and in the 1950s America's first commercial, pressurized jet airliner, the Boeing 707.

Boeing spent hours digging in their engineering files to come up with definite positive data. Thus I can report that on a Boeing 727 cruising at 35,000 feet the air in the cabin is completely exchanged for new, fresh air about every two-to-four minutes. That kind of massive air exchange does not occur in your home or in any office building that I know of.

Did the FAA not know about the air-exchange rate on airliners when they made their no smoking regulation? Did they care? The issue boils down to this: Is a Federally regulated no smoking ban on airliners justified on the basis of the hazard of passive smoke, based on what we know about the rate of exchange of air on a typical modern jet airliner? The data available suggest that it is not.

True, we face a danger from smoking. But we face a far greater and more long-term danger from a Federal bureaucracy that promulgates regulations based on the presumption of government knows best. □

Mr. Smith, a commercial pilot and retired FAA operations inspector, is a free-lance writer based in Smyrna, Georgia.

Letter to a Congressman

Dear Congressman:

I am writing to you to add some of my thoughts on the Federal budget beyond the answers I gave on your multiple choice survey. You will notice that I have checked the box indicating a desire to cut spending in each category listed. These responses are not given lightly; I considered each item listed before giving my response.

In a number of cases I would have much preferred to check a box in favor of eliminating the program rather than simply cutting its budget; in this category I would include college financial aid, mass transit, energy conservation, research and development, space programs, assistance to state and local law enforcement agencies, war on drugs, arts and humanities, and farm programs. These are all activities which should be funded privately, if at all. That is, those with an interest in funding such things should do so voluntarily, rather than through taxation or by incurring debt for future generations.

Much of the problem with the Federal budget has arisen out of the mistaken concept of a "right" to basic goods and services, and I am disturbed by your promotion of this concept in the headline from your newsletter: "Health Care: An American Right." This idea has all but destroyed an understanding among the public of the true concept of rights as expressed in the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights, where rights refer to areas where governments are proscribed from interfering with the individual, not to things which individuals can feel justified in having the government provide by stealing from others.

Dr. Dow, an Alabama resident, shared this letter with the staff of FEE. We thought it deserved wider distribution.

In this regard I would ask you to ponder the following words of Davy Crockett, spoken to the U.S. House of Representatives in regard to a bill to appropriate money for a "worthy cause" when he was a Congressman from Tennessee:

... we must not permit our respect for the dead or our sympathy for a part of the living to lead us into an act of injustice to the balance of the living. I will not go into an argument to prove that Congress has no power to appropriate this money as an act of charity. Every member upon this floor knows it. We have the right, as individuals, to give away as much of our own money as we please in charity; but as members of Congress we have no right so to appropriate a dollar of public money. . . .

... I am the poorest man on this floor. I cannot vote for this bill, but I will give one week's pay to the object, and if every member of Congress will do the same, it will amount to more than the bill asks.

The bill failed. Of course today it would be impossible for Congressmen to fund any but the tiniest of the programs they debate out of their own pockets, and it is extremely rare for a Congressman to consider the question of whether it is in his delegated authority under the Constitution to make budgetary commitments to all of today's massive programs.

We have seen great progress in this country since Davy Crockett's day, progress that has come by and large through the hard work and private enterprise of individuals seeking to better their lives. The destruction of the principle of limited government is a great threat to that progress and to our future.

Congressman, you have attained a position where you can help alleviate this threat if you can find the courage to place yourself above the constant cries from all of those pleading for more favors, appropriations, and regulations. I would ask you to climb to higher ground and consider not just what certain of your constituents would like from the government, but what right you have to dole those things out from funds taken by force from current taxpayers or borrowed against credit based on government's ability to extract money by force from our children.

Sincerely,

Stephen J. Dow

BOOKS

GIVE WAR A CHANCE: EYEWITNESS ACCOUNTS OF MANKIND'S STRUGGLE AGAINST TYRANNY, INJUSTICE AND ALCOHOL-FREE BEER

By P. J. O'Rourke

The Atlantic Monthly Press, 19 Union Square West, New York, NY 10003 • 1992 • 255 pages • \$20.95 cloth

Reviewed by William H. Peterson

Give War a Chance is, baldly, "about evil—evil ends, evil means, evil effects and causes." Ordinarily, evil is so commonplace that on its face P. J. O'Rourke admits it's no big deal to play it up. After all, every day the front page of most any newspaper reports evil, evil, evil. Evil sells newspapers. It also sells novels, movies, magazines, and television shows. We are all Adam and Eve—fascinated, if not beguiled and seduced, by the serpent in a thousand guises, tendering forbidden fruit.

But in re-reading this collection of previously published articles, what surprises political satirist O'Rourke is his own discovery of how much rampant evil is authored or abetted by one group: those ubiquitous starry-eyed people—the progressives, closet collectivists, bleeding hearts, mushy moral relativists everywhere, i.e., the *liberals*.

In O'Rourke's words, liberals "... are people I had been accustomed to thinking of as daffy, not villainous. Getting their toes caught in sandal straps, bumping their heads on wind chimes—how much trouble could they cause, even in a full-blown cultural-diversity frenzy? (I mean if Europeans didn't discover North America, how'd we all get here?)"

P. J. O'Rourke then goes on to charge that every iniquity reported in his book—and by my random count there's an average of eight iniquities per page or more than 2,000 in the book—is traceable to bad thinking or bad government, to intellectualism unhinged—to modern liberalism.

Liberals, he points out, are the gang of brainwashers in the media, pulpits, classrooms, courtrooms, legislatures, and elsewhere, those bad boys

and naughty girls in our midst who are busily making trouble by doing good for everybody including, ironically, themselves. They frequently make trouble by doing good under the rubric of "freedom" or "democracy," by which they secretly mean bullying, arm-twisting, state coercion. And they do so ever so angel-like, so sanctimoniously (sanctimoniousness is half their creed), that they get away with murder.

To quote the author: "Liberals want the freedom to put anything into their mouths, to say bad words and to expose their private parts in art museums. That liberals aren't enamored of real freedom may have something to do with responsibility—that cumbersome backpack which all free men have to lug on life's aerobic nature hike. The second item in the liberal creed, after self-righteousness, is unaccountability. Liberals have invented whole college majors—psychology, sociology, women's studies—to prove that nothing is anybody's fault."

Liberals, further holds the author, have an infantile view of the world. He writes: "At the core of liberalism is the spoiled child—miserable, as all spoiled children are, unsatisfied, demanding, ill-disciplined, despotic and useless. Liberalism is a philosophy of sniveling brats."

Yes, P. J. O'Rourke is himself sometimes nasty, raunchy, and given to four-letter words, but at least he's no hypocrite, no two-faced Janus. He's simply without pretension, without dissembling. At times he gets emotional at the tumbling-down of the Berlin Wall or at the liberation of Kuwait City. But he is funny. He's out to save neither the world nor fools from their own foolishness. He's calling a spade a spade, skewering liberals on their own hook, and having a lot of fun doing it.

Take his treatment of President Jimmy Carter and his wife Rosalynn. (He also treats, among others, Dr. Ruth, Lee Iacocca, and the Kennedys). Not long ago the Carters wrote a book, *Everything to Gain*, a book of incredible blandness and do-gooding naivete, a book nonetheless glorified in *The New York Times Book Review* as an "autobiography that is part confession, part pep talk and part handbook for activism... an inspiring account of the creation of a meaningful life."

Meaningful? I wonder. P. J. O'Rourke reports this guileless Rosalynn quotation in *Everything to Gain* that gives the reader a double take: "I have worked with the problems of the mentally afflicted

for years, ever since I first became aware of the needs while campaigning for Jimmy for Governor.”

Or this one:

“When I was young and in high school, during World War II, I thought Hirohito was the cruelest man in the world next to Hitler. I blamed the whole Pacific conflict on him. Years later . . . we went to Tokyo and called on a sweet little elderly man, who raised flowers in his hothouse at the palace . . . This was Emperor Hirohito—as far removed from my conception of him as he possibly could be.”

So the Carters ramble on in what P. J. O’Rourke tags “puerile and ignorant prose,” into which he occasionally interjects his two cents.

Can P. J. O’Rourke be victimizing the Carters, liberals par excellence? He points out that liberals are fond of victims and seek them everywhere. Victimology is their *raison d’être*. Minorities are their happy hunting ground. (Women, in the majority, are somehow declared to be a minority. Neat trick.) And the more victimized the better—the best victims being too ignorant, rattled or addled to challenge their liberal benefactors, who proceed to victimize their victims further (not unlike that hit-and-run driver who sees his victim stagger to his feet and backs up to hit him again). □

Dr. Peterson, an adjunct scholar at the Heritage Foundation and the Ludwig von Mises Institute, is the Lundy Professor of Business Philosophy at Campbell University, Buies Creek, North Carolina.

THE VIRTUE OF PRUDENCE

by Douglas J. Den Uyl

Peter Lang Publisher, New York • 1991 • 340 pages • \$64.00.

Reviewed by Tibor R. Machan

If there is one personal moral virtue that gives support not only to our commercial activities and the profession of business, but also to the economic system of capitalism, it is the virtue of prudence. As we ordinarily think of it, prudence means caring about one’s well-being, but there is a lot more to it than that.

For one thing, in the history of human reflection about ethics and morality an interesting development has been the decline of prudence as a morally significant item. In the works of modern ethicists, being prudent is usually *contrasted* with being

moral or ethical. For the Greeks, prudence was an important element of the moral life; whereas for moderns, it is virtually irrelevant to morality.

One result is that almost no important ethicist in our time believes that commerce, business, and capitalism are morally defensible. At most, these parts of human community life provide us with material wealth, so perhaps, as the early defenders of capitalism believed, it is a matter of “private vice, public benefit.” That is, we tolerate acting prudently simply so as to gain overall prosperity for our societies.

Professor Den Uyl’s book is a brilliant, unparalleled exploration of the details of the story I have barely hinted at. He traces its numerous intellectual elements; he analyzes all of them carefully; he then shows how mistaken moral and political philosophers have been to abandon concern for prudence. Finally, he develops the case for the reality and vital necessity of this virtue in modern life.

In his concluding sections, Professor Den Uyl shows us that not only the virtue of prudence but all the moral virtues require, for their exercise in human community life, the protection of the rights to life, liberty and property. He gives us a brief but very powerful outline of the argument advanced by some other philosophers of the free society, namely, that it is only in the fully free society that the moral or ethical nature of human living is fully honored. □

Tibor Machan is a visiting professor at the United States Military Academy, West Point. His most recent book is Capitalism and Individualism: Reframing the Argument for the Free Society (St. Martin’s Press, 1990).

FREEDOM: FREEDOM IN THE MAKING OF WESTERN CULTURE

by Orlando Patterson

Basic Books, 10 East 53rd Street, New York, NY 10022
1991 • 487 pages • \$29.95 cloth

Reviewed by Doug Bandow

Freedom “is the one value that many people seem prepared to die for,” writes sociologist Orlando Patterson, author of *Freedom: Freedom in the Making of Western Culture*. “It is the catchword of every politician, the secular gospel of our economic, ‘free enterprise’ system,

and the foundation of all our cultural activities.”

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, we are seeing most of the former Communist nations moving toward both economic and political liberty. Many of the same trends are evident in a number of newly industrializing countries, such as South Korea and Taiwan, as well as in impoverished Third World nations. Even though an authoritarian gerontocracy has been able to hang on to power in Beijing, the Chinese people's yearning for freedom is evident. “There is now hardly a country whose leaders, however dubiously, do not claim that they are pursuing the ideal,” observes Patterson. Yet, oddly, the U.S. seems to be moving in the opposite direction, with an ever-expanding state.

What makes these divergent trends so ironic is that the most important contribution of Western culture has probably been its emphasis on liberty. Observes Patterson, “No one would deny that today freedom stands as the supreme value of the Western world.” However, this is not, at least until recently, the case in Africa and the East. In these nations, writes Patterson, “other values were, or are, of far greater importance to them—values such as the pursuit of glory, honor, and power for oneself or one's family . . . the list is endless. But almost never, outside the context of Western culture and its influence, has it included freedom.”

Freedom, the first of two planned volumes, is Patterson's attempt to explain why one culture valued liberty while so many others did not. His effort is of particular interest today, as freedom—with the concomitant protection of democratic electoral processes, economic opportunity, and human rights—is finally advancing in Africa, Asia, and the one-time Soviet empire. Why has it taken so much longer in these areas?

Patterson seeks to answer this question, but his argument and ample research are undermined by his curious three-part definition of freedom. One variant is most clearly identified with the Anglo, and American, political tradition: “personal freedom” from coercion by the state. It is “at its most elementary,” writes Patterson, “the sense that one, on the one hand, is not being coerced or restrained by another person in doing something desired and, on the other hand, the conviction that one can do as one pleases within the limits of other persons' desire to do the same.”

Quite different is Patterson's second form of freedom: “sovereign,” that is, “the power to act as one pleases, regardless of the wishes of others.” This form of liberty is really authoritarianism—the right of a slaveholder or political leader, for instance, to operate without restraint. Finally, Patterson treats separately “civic freedom,” which he defines as “the capacity of adult members of a community to participate in its life and governance.” Although civic freedom implies some democratic guarantees, it may be matched with economic and personal tyranny.

Patterson argues that these often contradictory concepts “are the three constitutive elements of the uniquely Western chord of freedom.” His basic thesis is that all three developed in response to the institution of slavery. “Freedom began its career as a social value in the desperate yearning of the slave to negate what, for him or her, and for nonslaves, was a peculiarly inhuman condition,” he contends. Although others have made this argument before, Patterson says that they underestimated the long-term importance of freedom's genesis in slavery, since more than a simple change in technical legal status was at stake: “the idea of freedom has never been divorced from this, its primordial, servile source.”

His argument is obviously controversial and provocative. In brief, Patterson contends that the fear of slavery first created a real love of personal freedom among women, who were most at risk of enslavement and who could yearn for emancipation because their honor would not have been destroyed by a period of enslavement. Gradually the demand for male slaves increased, leading to “a slow masculation” of slavery, but men's desire for glory and honor long left no room for “any masculation of the expression of freedom.”

Men were, however, more interested in the other strands of freedom. Civic freedom, for instance, developed in Greece as part of what Patterson calls “the struggle between the free small farmers and the landowning elite.” Slavery played a decisive role in this battle, in Patterson's view, because small producers envied the larger slaveholders and demanded civic equality, which, in Patterson's lexicon, equals liberty. He writes: “men, for the first time, began to take freedom seriously. In doing so, however, they transferred it from the individual-personal domain of language to the public realm.”

Lastly, “sovereign” freedom naturally reflect-

ed the rights of the slave owner. This philosophy later grew in its larger sense—"the Homeric notion of the free community"—particularly in response to the Persian and Peloponnesian Wars. Free came to mean cultural imperialism, the superiority of Greeks as a collective unit, for instance.

Alas, Patterson's conclusions exceed his evidence. The most serious problem is his decision to lump together personal freedom, political equality ("civic freedom"), and state imperialism ("sovereign freedom") in discussing the evolution of "freedom." In fact, what we see is not the grand march of triune liberty, as Patterson treats it, but rather, a bitter and confusing struggle between individual and state that continues to this day.

Moreover, while the existence of such a dramatic counterpoint to liberty as slavery undoubtedly helped foster an appreciation of what it means to be free, a multitude of other factors were also obviously at work—and presumably account for why other slave societies never developed a similar appreciation of freedom. Indeed, Patterson himself acknowledges that slavery was a universal institution. But the apparent discrepancy, he says, can be explained: "while the idea of freedom was certainly engendered wherever slavery existed, it never came to term. People everywhere, except in the ancient West, resisted its gestation and institutionalization." He goes on to argue that some of the cultural aspects surrounding slavery developed differently in non-Western parts of the world; for instance, owners in Africa would promise some participation in the community, rather than release from bondage, as a reward for good service. Yet this raises more questions than it answers. For instance, if slavery was such a determining factor, why did both masters and slaves in different lands react so differently to the same institution?

Patterson goes on to track his three variants of liberty through Roman times (in which he finds slavery having a different, but still important, impact), the early Christian era, and Medieval Europe. One of his more important points is how

the Christian concept of spiritual equality undermined the institution of slavery, creating "a major crisis for the entire system" as early as A.D. 700.

However, he unsatisfactorily tries to force Christian doctrine, as expounded by the Apostle Paul, into his framework, arguing that there is "a shift in emphasis from personal freedom in Galatians to sovereign freedom in Romans." Here again, Patterson seems to be subsuming very different philosophical and theological concepts under the single heading of "freedom," a particularly dangerous undertaking since much of Christian doctrine is concerned with spiritual liberty, a concept with no secular equivalent.

But Patterson's most important argument remains the relationship of slavery to liberty. The history of slavery as "the handmaiden" of freedom, writes Patterson, "has bruited in the open what we cannot stand to hear, that inhering in the good which we defend with our lives is often the very evil we most abhor." Interestingly, Patterson seems profoundly ambivalent about this most fundamental of Western values, on which he has written a 487-page book. "At its best, the valorization of personal liberty is the noblest achievement of Western civilization," he says. But personal freedom, in his view, can be "evil and socially corrosive, inducing selfishness, alienation, the celebration of greed, and the dehumanizing disregard for the 'losers.'"

Freedom is a valuable work, packed with information and thoughtful analysis. Some of Patterson's insights about the historical development of liberty are truly profound. Yet his overemphasis on the role of slavery and his muddling of the definition of freedom make the volume frustrating to read. One wishes that he had better understood what liberty really meant before he wrote the book. □

Doug Bandow is a Senior Fellow at the Cato Institute and the author of The Politics of Plunder: Misgovernment in Washington.

Join us in the pursuit of an ideal.

We do not need to impugn the motives of those who have not as yet grasped the significance of freedom nor do we need vociferously to argue for points we cannot explain. Quite to the contrary, we can turn conscientiously to our own homework; we can aim at becoming competent expositors.

—Leonard E. Read

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